

A HANDBOOK OF  
PUBLIC SPEAKING

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BY JOHN DOLMAN, JR.

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OF PUBLIC SPEAKING

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# A HANDBOOK OF PUBLIC SPEAKING

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BY JOHN DOLMAN, JR.

PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH IN THE UNIVERSITY  
OF PENNSYLVANIA

REVISED EDITION



1937

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## PREFACE

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THE purpose of this book is to furnish the inexperienced public speaker with a concise statement of what constitutes effective public speaking, and how it may be learned. It is based upon the collective experience of those who have gone before, and is largely confined to the points upon which they have agreed.

I lay no claim whatever to originality. I have merely re-stated in convenient form a few fundamental truths, most of which were old when Demosthenes was a boy. Effective speaking is a problem in human nature, and human nature has changed little in two thousand years. Languages and customs and living conditions have changed, of course; and my task has been to present the old principles as clearly as possible in terms of modern life and modern taste. But I have invented nothing, and indulged in no guesswork. Every problem here discussed is real, every principle of daily application, every suggestion one that has been found to work in practice.

The book is not concerned with declamation, dramatics, or oral interpretation of literature, important as those things may be. It is confined to **public speaking**, by which I mean **leadership of thought through speech**. It be-

longs to the school of thought which emphasizes public speaking as communication rather than exhibition; and I am happy to acknowledge my indebtedness to Professor James A. Winans, from whose teaching all modern books in that school derive.

It is obvious from the title and size of the volume that it is not intended to be exhaustive. I have, in fact, made a deliberate effort to stop each discussion at the point of greatest interest, leaving plenty of room for further inquiry on the part of the student, and for supplementary comment by the teacher. No student is advised to work without a teacher if he can help it; but since many are forced to do so, I have tried to present the material in such a way that the student may make something of it for himself, and apply it intelligently in practice, whether in or out of the classroom. I need hardly say that practice in some form is essential, and that nobody can learn public speaking from a book alone.

In preparing the Revised Edition I have felt that the continued demand for the book over eleven years justified the retention of the original purpose, form, and style, and I have tried to keep it brief, clear, and readable. In response to many kind suggestions from teachers who have used the book, I have added two entirely new chapters on Parliamentary Speaking and Radio Speaking, a new section on Outlining, and much new material on speech composition, argumentation, persuasion, and articulation; I have rearranged the chapters to bring the material on speech preparation nearer the beginning, and to incorporate in the main text important matter formerly in the appendices; and

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I have rewritten the entire text for clarification, fresh illustration, and the removal of obsolete allusions.

I wish again to thank my colleague, Dr. Reese James, who read the original manuscript eleven years ago, and who has given me much help and advice on the revision; also the many friends at Pennsylvania, in the Eastern Public Speaking Conference, and in the National Association of Teachers of Speech, who have made critical and constructive suggestions.

J. D. JR.

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

October 21, 1933



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A HANDBOOK  
OF PUBLIC SPEAKING





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## *Chapter One*

### THE NATURE OF PUBLIC SPEAKING

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A GENERATION or two ago it was customary to regard public speaking as a Fine Art, in common with acting, interpretative reading, and elocution; and to confuse the teaching of it with the teaching of those subjects. To that fundamental misconception may be attributed much of the artificiality, insincerity, and bombast that have made the very words "elocution" and "oratory" a terror to persons of good taste.

An Art may be broadly defined as a human activity. It differs from a science in that it is concerned with doing, while a science is concerned with knowing.

But human activities have many purposes, and there are many kinds of Arts, differing so widely in purpose as to make classification difficult and confusing. It is common to speak of some of them as Fine Arts, and others as Useful Arts, or Mechanic Arts, or Handicrafts, but a clear distinction between them is not often attempted. Properly it is a distinction of purpose.

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An Art is not a Fine Art unless its purpose is first and foremost to give pleasure; to give, moreover, a certain kind of pleasure, namely æsthetic pleasure—pleasure derived from the sense of beauty; and to give it, finally, by means of an imitation or interpretation of life in terms of artistic conventions.

Thus painting is a Fine Art, aiming to give æsthetic pleasure by imitating life in terms of colors on a two-dimensional surface. Sculpture is a Fine Art, aiming to give æsthetic pleasure by imitating life in terms of clay or marble, with three dimensions, but without color. Music is a Fine Art, aiming to give æsthetic pleasure by imitating or interpreting life in terms of highly conventionalized sounds. But ditch-digging and blacksmithing are in this sense not Fine Arts, and neither is watchmaking, although the latter is a very fine art in point of quality and of skill required.

In the same way we see that acting is a Fine Art, aiming to give æsthetic pleasure by a conventionalized representation of life; so likewise is interpretative reading, which combines the creative art of the writer with the appreciative art of the reader, in order that the audience may experience æsthetic pleasure. Music, painting, sculpture, poetry, acting, interpretative reading—each of these is *like* life, but is *not* life, and is considered best when it is not too much like life; and this is true of all the Fine Arts.

But in **public speaking** we have something very different. We have, not a conventionalized imitation of life, but life itself, a natural function of life, a real human being in real communication with his fellows; and it is best

when it is *most* real. We have an activity, and therefore if you like, an Art; but a Useful Art, not a Fine Art. Fine it may be in some respects, like watchmaking or diplomacy — for the Useful Arts may be fine and the Fine Arts may be useful — but a Fine Art, like music, painting, or acting, it positively is not.

All of this is perfectly simple and obvious, which is why I set it down, for in our present complex state of civilization and education it is precisely the simple and obvious things that students do not know. There is much confusion of mind concerning the nature of public speaking; and those unfortunates who as little children were made to “speak pieces” in Sunday school, or to recite gems from “One Hundred Choice Selections” in the assembly room at school — under the impression that that agonizing performance constituted public speaking — are the ones who find it hardest to shake off this confusion.

I know a man who has this difficulty. He is a successful business executive, past middle age, tremendously capable, with a brain full of ideas, an engaging personality, a good voice and manner, and a perfect command of his tongue — in private. He can talk fluently and powerfully to two or three or a half dozen serious-minded men sitting about a directors’ table, and carry his point. But ask him to appear in public and “make a speech” (using those words) and he suddenly becomes idiotically self-conscious.

“Oh, I can’t make a speech,” he says, giggling foolishly. “You mustn’t ask me, really.”

And if you are wise you won’t, for the truth is he can’t. The reason is that he thinks public speaking is a Fine Art

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— a thing like music or sculpture, that calls for a special gift, years of drill, a masterly technique, an artistic soul; a thing essentially artificial, mysteriously unreal, only to be successfully performed by a temperamental genius — a talker rather than a doer. In short, he thinks of public speaking as an abnormal, not a normal, thing. No wonder it scares him.

Will he get over it? Probably not. At his age misconceptions tend to stiffen up and become permanent; the more a man learns, the harder it is for him to discern through the mists of knowledge the simple truths and basic distinctions that he has missed.

But younger men, and women, may profit by his example, and perhaps avoid his mistakes.

The chief difficulty with most student speakers grows out of the fact that they have no clear idea of the mental relationships involved in the situation of a speaker addressing an audience. To them, especially when they are nervous or timid, the audience is merely a terrifying Presence, rather than an essential element in the purpose of the speech.

When I ask a student speaker what his purpose is, in nine cases out of ten he answers: "To tell about Russia" (or "socialism," or "the election," or whatever his subject happens to be). He does not say, "To tell *you* about Russia," or "To tell *them* about Russia." He uses the transitive verb "tell" without a direct object.

He does this because he is not thinking about his audience at all; he is thinking about himself and his subject matter, and how to get it off his chest. He can do this while staring at the ceiling, or the wall, or out of the win-

dow, and he can do it just as well — perhaps better — when no audience is present.

This is not public speaking. Nobody can possibly speak well when he thinks of himself and his subject and ignores his audience. He may imagine he is speaking well; he may be expressing himself beautifully. But beautiful self-expression is not the modern idea of public speaking. Not power to *express* one's self, but power to *impress* one's audience is the measure of effectiveness in a public speaker today.

Good speaking, whether public or private, is **communication**. The word means the act of sharing something with others; it comes from the Latin *con* (with) and *munus* (a business), through *communis* (common) and *communico* (to confer or consult with one another). In English we add another "with," and say that a speaker communicates with his audience. This double insistence on the "with" should serve to remind the student of the common or reciprocal nature of the act involved in communication.

In order to understand this reciprocal quality he should think of what happens when two persons converse. Both are parties to the conversation; neither is passive; each gives his active attention to the other, and experiences a sense of direct mental contact with him; and there is a spirit of give and take that is by no means lost when one person happens to have a little more to say than the other.

We are all accustomed to conversing in this manner, and most of us do so without discomfort and with reasonable effectiveness every day. We find it just as easy to talk to

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two or three, or a half dozen, so long as the atmosphere is that of private conversation; but the moment somebody says "public speaking" we go all to pieces, as if the situation had suddenly become different and quite unfamiliar. This is the heart of the problem, and the student who would speak effectively must positively learn that **the essential mental relationship between the speaker and his audience is always the same, no matter how large or small the audience, or how formal or informal the occasion.**

I have not said, of course, that the speaker's manner is always the same, or that it should be. Obviously it should not. It should vary to suit the situation and circumstances. Necessity and good taste will dictate appropriate modifications of posture, gesture, voice, vocabulary, phraseology, and force. But these modifications are quantitative rather than qualitative; they merely alter the scale of the speech. The larger the audience or the more formal the occasion, the greater the tax on the speaker's voice, poise, and self-control.

Just how large an audience calls for a really public style is a matter of opinion; one speaker of my acquaintance says that to him thirty people constitute an audience; another says twenty, and another twelve. In any case circumstances will alter the number; one might speak more formally to six people at one time than to sixty at another.

The earnest student will find much to occupy him in the study of these modifications of style, but his time will be wasted if he does not first grasp the fact that public speaking is simply **expanded conversation**; that the difference between public and private speaking is a difference of

degree only — a difference without a distinction; that in all speaking, public or private, the true relationship of speaker and audience is the same.

The relationship must be **direct**, **reciprocal**, and **sincere**.

It must be **direct** in the sense that there must be no barrier of distance or remoteness between speaker and audience; there must be no dreamy look on the speaker's face, no far-away tone in his voice; he must be mentally in contact with his audience.

It must be **reciprocal** in the sense that there must be response from the audience, expected and given, not necessarily in words, or even in laughter or applause; perhaps only in active attention and understanding; but nevertheless response. The speaker must be continually anticipating and answering the unspoken question, or meeting the unspoken objection.

It must be **sincere**, not merely in the moral but in the intellectual sense. It is not enough that the speaker shall have an honest purpose; he must be natural and genuine; his intellectual processes must be real and spontaneous, no matter how well prepared, and he must be free of artificiality or pretense. Only thus can he avoid setting up barriers between himself and his audience, destroying their attention and stimulating in himself the very "nervousness" he is so anxious to allay.

This so-called "nervousness" is after all the chief problem with most students of public speaking. I have hardly ever met a student who did not assert that his object in taking the public speaking course was "to overcome nervous-

ness." It seems to him that that is all there is to public speaking.

"I'd be all right," he says, "if I could only get over my nervousness. I know what I want to say, but when I get up there on the platform I get all confused; I can't think on my feet, and I can't say what I want to say at all. How can I overcome that?"

The answer is that practice will gradually lessen the difficulty, but only with the aid of a clear understanding of the nature of public speaking, and of the mental relationship between speaker and audience.



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## Chapter Two

### THE SPEAKER'S PURPOSE

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A CERTAIN type of student speaker is like the man in the old song with the blithe refrain: "I don't know where I'm going, but I'm on my way." He has no goal, no objective, but he goes ahead just the same.

Ask him what his purpose is, and as I have already remarked he will look vaguely about and say, "Why — er — to tell about so-and-so" — mentioning his *subject*, not his *purpose*. Rare indeed is the genius who answers unhesitatingly, "To convince my audience that such-and-such a measure would be wise," or, "To entertain my audience with an account of some personal adventures."

Yet it ought to be obvious that in public speaking as in other things a clear fixed purpose is essential if one is to stand a reasonable chance of accomplishing it.

Absence of a clear purpose is a habit with twentieth century Americans. Rapidity and complexity of life lead naturally to confusion, haste, superficiality, and muddle-headedness; and with these goes vagueness of purpose.

If the student speaker is to overcome the habit in his own

case he must first learn by analysis what the possible purposes of a speaker are, and then so govern himself that he never speaks except with one of those purposes definitely and dominantly in mind.

Remembering that purpose in a speaker is to be considered in terms of what he is trying to do to the audience, we may fairly say that the possible purposes are:

- |                 |               |
|-----------------|---------------|
| 1. To inform    | 4. To impress |
| 2. To enlighten | 5. To excite  |
| 3. To convince  | 6. To actuate |
| 7. To entertain |               |

Note that each of these is presented in the form of a transitive verb to which the words "the audience" may be added as direct object.

The classification is arbitrary, of course. Other writers divide differently, or use different terms; some combine numbers 1 and 2, or 4 and 5, or 5 and 6. The student may very well analyze for himself, choosing his own terms. The essential thing is that he shall have some rational classification sufficiently comprehensive to include all possible purposes of the speaker, and that from it he shall choose the main purpose of each speech. If he wishes to follow my classification, the following explanation may be helpful:

1. **To inform.** The speaker's purpose is to inform when he seeks primarily to furnish his hearers with facts, especially with facts new to them; when he aims to increase their knowledge as distinct from their understanding. His effort is directed at the recording function of the mind — at the memory, if you like; and the measure of success is qualitative. A teacher

giving out the multiplication table is an example; or a research scholar stating the results of some original investigations; or a returned explorer recounting his discoveries.

**2. To enlighten.** The speaker's purpose is to enlighten when he aims to clear up some difficulty of comprehension; to present, not necessarily new facts, but a new view of the relationship of facts; to improve his hearers' understanding of a given subject rather than to increase their knowledge; in other words, to explain something to them. The teacher explaining long division is an example of this; or a mathematician expounding the theory of relativity; or a football coach giving a black-board demonstration of a complicated play.

Many teachers do not distinguish these two purposes, using the term "to inform" to cover both. I grant that there is less difference between them than between, let us say, "to actuate" and "to entertain"; but the speaker cannot be too clear about his purpose, and even minor differentiations are helpful.

**3. To convince.** The speaker's purpose is to convince when he seeks to make his audience believe a debatable assertion, accept a statement as true, or adopt an opinion. It is not knowledge or understanding that he seeks, but agreement; though he may use knowledge or understanding as a means to that end. The legislator supporting a bill; the attorney arguing a point at law before a judge; the sincere propagandist seeking converts to a new cause — these are examples. But the contentious "chronic kicker," the political mud-slinger, the fire-eating orator denouncing his enemies and laying down the law, are not; for they are making no sincere attempt to convince.

**4. To impress.** The speaker's purpose is to impress when he seeks to bring to his hearers a new and deeper realization of a truth, perhaps an old truth already known to them; not to make them know it, or understand it merely, but to make them feel it, and feel it deeply; to sear it into their souls by challeng-

ing attention, appealing to the sympathies, and associating emotion with thought. The patriotic orator repeating the familiar message of the life of Washington or Lincoln, as a source of inspiration to his hearers; the preacher striving to tell the story of Christmas in such a way as to awaken new reverence of spirit in his congregation; the college president bidding farewell to the senior class in old but hallowed words — all these are examples.

5. **To excite.** The speaker's purpose is to excite when he seeks to reach the more direct and more tempestuous emotional reactions in his audience; to arouse such emotions as fear, hatred, indignation, enthusiasm, hilarity, pugnacity — not as means to an end but as ends in themselves. It is the least worthy purpose, though not the least common. It is the purpose of the worst type of mob orator, the agitator, the spellbinder. Its independence of other purposes is the measure of its unworthiness: as a means to other ends it may at times be justifiable. Closely associated with the purpose to impress, it differs from it in that it appeals to the emotions alone, while to impress appeals to the emotions and thoughts harmoniously combined. To impress implies a strengthening of the spiritual control of the listener; to excite implies a weakening.

Here, also, some writers refuse to allow a distinction, on the ground that excitation is but a means, not an end. As either it is dangerous, and as an end it is vicious, and I cite it to call attention to its evils.

6. **To actuate.** The speaker's purpose is to actuate when he aims not merely to plant beliefs or impressions that may later work out into actions, but to move his hearers to some definite act — particularly some act to be performed at the time and place of the speech, or very soon after. The appeal may be emotional, perhaps following excitation; or it may be intellectual, perhaps following conviction; or it may be a combination of both. People who are convinced of a truth do not

always get round to act upon their convictions; it is often necessary to add persuasion — that is, to arouse their emotions in such a way as to overcome their natural inertia and provide a motive force. Examples may be found in the political speaker urging his party constituents to come out and vote; the missionary appealing for funds; the recruiting officer in war time exhorting a crowd of men to enlist.

7. **To entertain.** The speaker's purpose is to entertain when he has no other object than to give his hearers pleasure. The pleasure may be of a mirthful or a sober kind: entertainment does not necessarily imply hilarity. Some writers use the term "to interest" in this same sense; it is perhaps a broader term, but seems to me to suggest a means rather than a purpose. Of examples, the commonest is the after-dinner speech; a more sober one is the Chautauqua or University Extension lecture of the type purporting to be educational, but really primarily intended to entertain.

The purpose of entertainment brings public speaking nearer the Fine Arts than any other purpose; but modern taste calls for a degree of genuineness even here. The speech may be interesting and give pleasure without suggesting an exhibition of beauty or skill.

Such are the possible purposes of a speaker. Clearly one of them must dominate every speech if the speech is to have unity, for unity is really nothing more or less than singleness of purpose.

Other purposes besides the main one may enter into a speech as contributing or subordinate elements; or a speech may have both an immediate and an ultimate purpose. The student should keep clearly in mind the difference between a means and an end; between a contributory and a

dominant purpose. He should realize that one may have many purposes within a purpose, and many unities within a unity. A novel, for instance, may have ten chapters, four of which are informative in purpose, three entertaining, two impressive, and one enlightening; yet the purpose of the whole may be to convince. The unity of purpose of the whole novel is built out of ten lesser unities, no one of which may happen to be the same as the unity of the whole. And each of these chapter unities is built up out of still smaller paragraph unities, and each paragraph unity out of still smaller sentence unities. One is reminded of Dean Swift:

So naturalists observe a flea  
Has smaller fleas that on him prey,  
And these have smaller still to bite 'em,  
And so proceed ad infinitum.

But the most practical thing I can say about purpose in public speaking is this: I have never known a student speaker to fail because he did not have enough different purposes combined in his speech, whereas many fail every day because they have too many purposes in one speech, or because they have no clear purpose at all.

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## *Chapter Three*

### MOTIVATION

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**B**ESIDES a subject and a purpose every good speech must have a **motive**. That is, there must be a reason or justification for its existence—or rather a whole set of reasons. There must be reasons for the choice of time, of place, of speaker, of subject, of purpose; reasons why the speaker should find it necessary to speak; reasons why the audience should be willing to stay and listen. In short, there must be an appropriateness in the situation as a whole which everybody present can feel.

Unfortunately the classroom situation, being a somewhat artificial one, is not conducive to good motivation, and most students have a great deal of difficulty in cultivating a sense of motive, and an appreciation of its need.

For example:

A student recites a dreary lot of second-hand facts about, let us say, the difficulties of climbing Mt. Everest. The class quietly dozes. When he is finished I ask him what his motivation is supposed to be.

He stares at me with a slightly injured look, and then starts out with the usual formula:

"Why — er — to tell about . . ."

I interrupt him. "Yes, yes, but why should you?"

That floors him. He doesn't like to confess that since he *had* to make a speech he thought one subject would do as well as another. He stammers a little and then blurts out:

"Well — I thought it would be interesting."

"How do you mean?"

He stammers again, and then his face lights up; he has suddenly remembered something taught him in a course in composition.

"Why," he says, "it interested me, and so I thought it would interest others. The Proff in English One says that what interests the writer is pretty sure to interest the reader, and you said yourself we ought to choose subjects we are interested in."

"But," I ask, "how did the subject come to interest you? Did you ever try to climb Mt. Everest?"

"Oh, no! I read an article about it in the *National Geographic Magazine*."

"Who wrote the article?"

"Some scientist; I don't remember his name."

"Did he know anything about Mt. Everest?"

"He seemed to."

"Had he been there?"

"Yes, I think so."

"Was the article illustrated?"

"Oh, yes; quite a number of pictures."

"Photographs?"



"Yes, I think they were."

"And so you think," I continue, "that because this article interested you it ought to interest others?"

"Yes."

"Well, so it ought, and does — the article, that is. The article is perfectly motivated. But that does not prove that a speech by you on the same subject would interest others. As a matter of fact it didn't, as you saw, and the reason is that for you the subject lacks motive because it is purely second-hand."

And then I try to explain to him and to the class that there is every reason in the world why a scientist, having acquired experience and photographs of the country about Mt. Everest, should publish them in the *National Geographic Magazine*; and every reason why the sort of person who reads that magazine should be interested in the article. "But why," I ask them, "should a college student who knows no more about Mt. Everest than any other casual reader of the *Geographic* presume to lecture upon that subject? And why should a class of bored public speaking students manifest an interest in his effort?"

They shouldn't, and they don't. And no audience ever will manifest an interest in a speech that is not in some way motivated.

It is true that outside of the classroom motivation is frequently automatic: that is, the speech is motivated by the circumstances. If Charles A. Lindbergh is advertised to speak at an aviators' convention on transatlantic flying everybody knows why — why there is to be a speech, why Colonel Lindbergh and not someone else is to deliver it,

and why he has chosen that subject; and nobody is likely to attend who does not really want to hear the speech. That is perfect motivation, with no special effort on the speaker's part.

Not all speeches, however, even outside the classroom, are delivered by well-known speakers, or by persons of authority. Often an audience is entirely in the dark as to the identity or qualifications of a speaker, or his relation to the subject, or the relation of the subject to the occasion; especially is this true when there are to be a number of speakers at the one meeting. In such cases the burden of motivation is likely to be entirely on the speaker; he must provide all the necessary reasons, and provide them quickly and clearly.

This is just what the college student, addressing his classmates in public speaking on a subject of his own choosing, does not do. The trouble is that he is too conscious of the real reason for a classroom speech, which is, of course, that the instructor has assigned it. The speaker is chosen because it is his turn; the audience listens because it has to; and the subject is chosen because the poor unfortunate student must choose some subject or other, and this one is the best he could think of.

But if classroom work in public speaking is to be made effective, instructor and students must resolutely refuse to acknowledge this artificial situation. They must try to imagine that the speaker is speaking because he has something important and appropriate to say, and is eager to say it; that the rest are listening because they are interested, and have some concern in the matter themselves; and that the

subject is chosen because it has some real significance for both speaker and audience. The student speaker must forget that he is a student and think of himself as a speaker. He must shake off the recitation attitude, with its dependence upon Teacher, and assume the independent attitude of participation and leadership in discussion. He must understand that if he does not learn to do it in class he will not realize the necessity of doing it elsewhere. He will be making ineffectiveness a habit.


"But," says an objecting student, "it is very hard to motivate a class speech. The occasion doesn't provide any motivation, and we can't always find subjects we know all about; we don't know enough."

I hear this sort of objection very often, in this and other connections. I am afraid that the attitude of mind which the objection represents is the real reason for the difficulty in motivation, and for a good many other difficulties that beset the student in all subjects. The student of today, bred to the notion that education should be entertaining rather than disciplinary, seems to think that his whole duty is to perform a certain painless routine along the path of least resistance; that it is unfair and unreasonable for an instructor to ask him to do anything *hard*. His attitude is passive and defensive. He will not go after knowledge. He will permit the instructor to give it to him, of course — provided the instructor will be entertaining in manner and reasonable in his demands. If the instructor wants motivated speeches the student will make a reasonable effort to motivate them. If the instructor is not satisfied, well — the student is sorry, but he did his best; he cannot be expected

to shoulder all the worries of the course. Let the instructor be clearer about it. Let him provide his own subjects and motivate them himself.

I am not exaggerating. Not one bit. I have had many a student, annoyed at criticism, invite me to suggest subject, or purpose, or motive for him, in a manner that said all too plainly, "If you don't like my way of doing it, do it yourself. *I* didn't invent motivation." Of course not, and neither did the teacher. But what the student seems to have missed is the fact that it is his speech that is to be motivated, and his audience that is to be kept awake. He should remember that the classroom audience is the only one he will ever have that will be restrained from walking out on him by the fear of incurring "cuts."

There are obviously two ways of motivating a class speech. One is to select a fool-proof topic that motivates itself; which is the hardest way, especially after the student has spoken many times. The other is to use a little imagination and ingenuity in order to motivate a topic that might not carry itself without. It may help somewhat if the student will bear in mind the following contributory elements of good motivation:

1. Evidence of inside, or first-hand, information on the part of the speaker, especially if rare or unusual.
2. Evidence of unusually broad and deep knowledge of the subject, giving the impression of authority. 
3. Evidence of enthusiasm for the subject on the part of the speaker, tremendous and contagious.
4. Establishment of a bond of common interest in the subject, uniting speaker and audience; it may grow out of the near-

ness of the subject, or its universality, or the fact that it has been discussed before in the same company.

5. Evident timeliness of the subject; its obvious relation to some current situation or event.

6. Intrinsic interest of the subject, which I put last because it is the least reliable; intrinsic interest is not an absolute, but a relative thing, and many a student is fooled by that fact. However, allowing for the relativity, subjects do differ in degree of *probable* interest.

Any one of these elements, except the last, will do much to provide a motive; but if several of them can be combined so much the better. For classroom purposes numbers 1, 4, and 5 are most likely to be helpful.

After all, motivation is not so very difficult once the student has cultivated a sense of its necessity. His failure to do so is sometimes due to his inability to see things from the listener's point of view, and sometimes to persistent confusion of motive with subject and purpose. In the latter case it may help him to remember, quite simply, that his **subject** is what he proposes to talk about; his **purpose** what he proposes to do to his audience; and his **motive** his reasons for thinking both appropriate.

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## *Chapter Four*

### SUBJECT MATTER

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ONE of the first questions the student asks in a public speaking course is, "What shall I talk about?" In general, the most helpful answer I can give him is, "Whatever you can best motivate."

It is all very well to say, "Choose something you know about, something that interests you, something that is appropriate to the occasion." That is just what the speaker outside of the classroom will try to do without being told. But it does not help the student with his speeches in class, because in the first place there isn't any particular occasion, and in the second place after he has addressed the same audience a number of times he begins to run out of topics that he is interested in and knows all about—or at any rate he thinks he is running out of them, which has the same effect.

Sometimes, of course, the instructor will assign a topic for class discussion. This relieves mentally lazy students of the burden of a choice, and it helps the motivation by giving speaker and listeners a common basis of discussion. Al-

ways, however, there are some students who will complain that the class topic does not interest them; that they do not know enough about it, and cannot find anything to say.

Curiously enough it is usually the very same students who complain when they are allowed to select topics for themselves.

"Please suggest a topic," says a student of this type; "I can't find anything to talk about." But no topic I suggest seems to suit, and if I send him to a list of a hundred good topics he comes back and says, "I have been all over the list, and I don't know anything about any of them." There is no use telling him that the fault lies not with the subjects but with him; if he is a self-assured person he resents it, and if he is modest or timid it alarms and discourages him. "I suppose the trouble is I don't know as much as the other fellows," he laments; "I've never travelled much, or done anything exciting, and I don't read the papers much, so most of these topics are over my head."

All this is nonsense, of course, though perfectly natural and understandable. No normal student of college age, or even of high school age, in good health and in his right mind, is so devoid of mental content and background as to have nothing to say. His trouble is simply that he has not cultivated the associative powers of his mind. He has plenty of interesting ideas stowed away, but he does not know how to recall them effectively when he wants them; how to find stimulation in the relationship of fresh ideas with those in his past experience. To the associative mind almost any idea is a suggestion which touches off a chain of ideas; the mention of one thing immediately recalls

something else, which in turn recalls other things, and soon the mind is in full activity.

By way of example:

A student came to me for suggestions, and I sent him to a long list of topics. He came back with the usual complaint. I took the list and picked a title at random. It happened to be "Woodrow Wilson in Retrospect," the title of a speech by one of my students just after the death of the War President. But my questioner looked blank. "I don't know anything about Woodrow Wilson," he said.

"Do you know any interesting person in any walk of life who has recently died or retired from active life?" I asked him.

"Why, yes," he answered, promptly enough; "General So-and-So, who died the other day, was a friend of my father's, and I met him quite a few times."

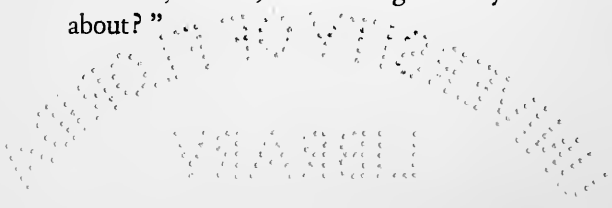
"Well," I said, "why not a speech on General So-and-So in Retrospect?"

"Would that be all right?" he asked in a tone of pleased surprise; and being assured that it would he prepared and subsequently delivered an excellent appraisal of the General's life and service.

When a young woman student came to me in a similar predicament, the topic I selected at random was "The Religion of the Red Man." She looked even blanker.

"My goodness!" she exclaimed, "I don't know the first thing about the red man. I didn't even know he had a religion."

"Well," I said, "what religion *do* you know something about?"





"None, I guess," and she grinned sheepishly. "I'm afraid I don't even know much about my own."

I asked her what her religion was, and she answered that she was not a very religious person, but had been baptized and brought up in the Episcopal Church.

"In that case," I suggested, "you might be able to make something out of Emerson's famous saying that 'the Episcopalians are sure to get into Heaven on their good taste.'"

She jumped up and snapped her fingers. "Thanks! That's just the idea I want. I'll talk about the Episcopal Church." But when, a week later, it was her turn to speak, she did even better, and spoke about good taste as an evidence of good faith in religious worship — obviously a more tolerant and more delicate topic, less likely to give offense to those of another faith.

In looking for a topic the student must learn not to depend upon finding one ready made. Such a topic would not be his, anyhow; it would belong to the person who had already used it.

What he must do is to develop his powers of association in such a way that when he looks at a number of topics that have been used by others they will stir up related or contrasting ideas in his own mind and engender a lively train of thought. The result may be a topic utterly different from the one or ones suggested to him, but much better for his purposes.

Lists of topics from which to draw suggestions in this way are easily made up by the student himself. He can get them from the book titles on the library shelves, from the

contents pages of current magazines, from weekly magazine sections in the better newspapers, from the encyclopedia, from the bookstore window, from the radio, or from the news columns of the daily press — though he should be on guard against the hasty, inaccurate, and extremely temporary character of newspaper information, which is often out of date before he can use it in a speech. By way of illustration, a short list of topics that have actually been used for successful classroom speeches is given at the end of this chapter. Such a list must, of course, be arbitrary, and largely temporary; it is offered merely to suggest the wide range of suitable topics.

Current events and current discoveries in politics, economics, art, science, and philosophy, offer the most prolific sources of material for student speeches.

Campus topics are sometimes useful: they are easy to motivate, and productive of a lively audience response. But the actual fact is that relatively few student speeches on campus topics are good speeches. The reason is probably overconfidence. The speaker is so sure of his grasp on the subject that he does not prepare adequately. Campus discussions are after all mainly discussions by immature people of problems growing out of their immaturity, and there is little incentive in them for the student to rise above his limitations. On the other hand, students do surprisingly well when they reach out for topics that at first seem a little beyond them. I have heard a student argue, let us say, the necessity of better cheering at the football games in the manner of a Booth Tarkington adolescent, and then turn around the next week and give a really thoughtful and penetrating

talk on some such topic as currency inflation, or the care of the feeble-minded.

Discussions occurring in other courses, especially social science courses, furnish good topics for speeches in the public speaking class, with the additional advantage that they permit the student to economize labor and do more intensive work by preparing two lessons at once.

In class most students show an almost irresistible tendency to choose informative topics; that is, topics upon which they can speak with an informative purpose. An informative purpose presupposes some motive of authority on the part of the speaker and some willingness to be informed on the part of the audience, both of which qualities are apt to be lacking in the routine work of an ordinary college class. But so easy is it for the student to fall back on some ready source of information like a magazine article, and then simply relay that information second hand, that the average student will do so rather than make the necessary effort to find well motivated topics. Then he struggles along in a hopeless effort to impart information that he really has not got to an audience that does not want it.

In general, it will pay him better to try his hand at convincing, or impressing, or actuating his audience. Experience has demonstrated that these are the most successful purposes for classroom speaking, while information and excitation are the least successful. This is not to say that the student should never speak to inform. If he happens to have an unusual bit of inside information, some little known facts about something of general interest, or an unusually authoritative command of a pet subject, he may

speaking informatively with good success. It is simply that the motivation of such speeches is a little harder.

Many of the best student speeches grow out of the impulse to answer others, either to improve upon what they have said, or to refute it, or to cite parallel or contrasting cases. Such speeches have the advantage of being almost perfectly motivated to start with, and they help to strengthen the speech situation by cultivating the reciprocal relationship between speaker and audience.

Having chosen his topic, the speaker has still to gather the substance of his speech.

The first steps, of course, are fairly obvious. One must master his subject himself before he can hope to present it to others. He must have something to say, and he must have a great deal more than he does say, else he will fail to show the necessary reserve power. All this means, usually, reading, study, and thought, followed by composition.

In his search for material the student will need access to a good library, including a reference room and a periodical room. He must learn to use the library catalogue, not merely to find the shelf numbers of books he knows he wants, but as a source of leads and suggestions; and he must learn to use the various reference works and readers' guides in the same way. To do this effectively for any subject he should first make a list of key words relating to that subject, and then look them all up alphabetically in the catalogue and in the latest readers' guides.

Before he can do much of this he must, of course, familiarize himself with the available reference works. For this

purpose it will pay him to spend several afternoons early in the term just browsing around and getting acquainted.

One afternoon may be devoted exclusively to the library catalogue. By thumbing over the cards in a number of drawers, chosen at random, he can learn much of the system of notation and cross-reference in use. The librarian can usually supply a list of the classifications and their serial numbers; many libraries follow a uniform system of numbering. The student should inspect the shelf arrangements in the reference room, and in the stacks if he has access to them. He should try following up some of the cross-references indicated on the catalogue cards, especially where cards are marked, "For criticism of, see . . .", or "For additional references, see . . .", and the like. He should ask the librarian to explain any notations or abbreviations on the cards that are not clear to him. He should learn to read a library card with the eye of a detective, spotting any clue that may possibly lead him to additional sources of information. In one afternoon of determined effort he may learn more about the catalogue and its possibilities than he would pick up by accident in many weeks of perfunctory work on definite assignments.

Another afternoon may be devoted to the available dictionaries and encyclopedias. Many students are surprisingly ignorant of these, with the possible exception of *Webster* and the *Britannica*. The student should examine all the general encyclopedias, especially the *International*, and compare them with the *Britannica*, noting the particulars, if any, in which they may be more useful. He should see what special encyclopedias are on the shelves, and what limited fields

they cover. He should compare the various dictionaries, noting especially the scope and completeness of the *Oxford English Dictionary* (originally titled *A New English Dictionary*). By choosing a few troublesome words and looking them up successively in the *Oxford*, the *American Century Dictionary*, *Webster's*, and the *Standard*, he can get a good idea of the character and limitations of each. If the library is a large one he will be amazed at the number of special dictionaries, such as dialectal dictionaries, and dictionaries of slang, as well as those of foreign languages.

A third afternoon should be given to the study of bibliographical guides and indexes, handbooks of quotation and allusion, outline histories, and books of statistical information. The following brief list covers the very minimum of such books that he ought to know at least by sight:

**Publishers' Trade List Annual**

Annual price list of American publications.

**United States Catalogue of Books in Print (and Supplements)**

A permanent list of contemporary American books.

**Reference Catalogue of Current Literature**

A similar list of English publications.

**Poole's Index to Periodical Literature**

Well known and useful, but only up to 1906.

**Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature**

Covers similarly the years since 1906.

**International Index to Periodicals**

A newer one, current since 1921.

**The New York Times Index to the News** (monthly)

**Ploetz, C. Manual** (formerly *Epitome*) of **Universal History**

The world's history in chronological outline.

**Universal Atlas of the World**

**Cyclopedia of American Government** (3 vols.)

**Cyclopedia of Political Economy and U. S. History** (3 vols.)

**The Statesman's Year Book** (annual)

**The American Year Book** (New York Times)

**The World Almanac** (annual)

**Who's Who in America** (biennial)

**The Women's Who's Who of America**

**Dictionary of National Biography**

The standard biographical dictionary of England.

**National Cyclopedia of American Biography**

The American counterpart.

**Lippincott's Pronouncing Biographical Dictionary**

A smaller general work (2 vols.)

**A Reader's Handbook** (Brewer)

**Dictionary of Phrase and Fable** (Brewer)

**A Smaller Classical Dictionary** (Smith) (in Everyman's Library)

**A Dictionary of Non-Classical Mythology** (Edwardes) (in Everyman's Library)

**Cyclopedia of Practical Quotations** (Hoyt)

**Familiar Quotations** (Bartlett)

Such a list is merely a suggestion; the student should make his own list for later use after going carefully over the shelves of the reference alcove, and more briefly over those of the sections devoted to economic, political, and historical works. Time spent in this way at the beginning of the school year is not only a good investment in general education, but an actual economy in that it shortens the time needed for preparation at a later and busier season.

### SAMPLE SPEECH TOPICS

**The Menace of the Automobile** (To impress)

By a student of insurance statistics.

**Should Education Be Made Easy?** (To convince)

By a hater of intellectual mollicoddles.

**The Truth About Russia** (To inform)

By a student who has just been there.

**Aristotle's Theory of Government** (To enlighten)

By one who has just discovered Aristotle's modernity.

**Is Democracy a Failure?** (To convince) !

By a believer in the efficiency of dictatorships.

- My Trip Around the World** (To entertain)  
By a student who earned his way in the ship's band.
- Get Acquainted With the Library** (To actuate)  
By a student who has been "browsing," and likes it.
- In Defense of Jazz** (To convince)  
By one who thinks classical music dull.
- Trouble Shooting on the Power Lines** (To enlighten)  
By a student who has worked as a lineman.
- Silly Censorship** (To convince)  
By a liberal-minded sophisticate.
- The World's Greatest Menace** (To entertain)  
By a humorist who blames it all on chewing gum.
- Is Charity Immoral?** (To convince)  
By a reader of Nietzsche who has been much impressed.
- Hitch-Hiking to Canada** (To entertain)  
By a student who spends his vacations on the road.
- Send a Kid to the Country** (To actuate)  
By a campaigner for the college settlement camp.
- Putting It All Over Grandma** (To entertain)  
By a modern girl, in defense of her generation.
- Should the U. S. Constitution Be Amended to Provide for a Government By Responsible Ministry?** (To convince)  
By a serious student of political science.
- What Is Socialism?** (To enlighten)  
By a student who loathes confusion of terms.
- Our Dismal Military History** (To impress)  
By a student of War Department statistics.
- The Curse of Advertising** (To convince)  
By one who thinks it wasteful and degrading.
- The Need of Better College Spirit** (To actuate)  
By a discouraged cheer leader.
- Why We Lost the Last Game** (To enlighten)  
By a critic of football strategy.
- Pasteur** (To impress)  
By an admirer of the great scientist.
- My Impressions of America** (To entertain)  
By a foreign student, recently arrived.
- The Theory of Relativity** (To enlighten)  
By a student who thinks he understands it.
- The Menace of the Racketeer** (To impress)  
By one who foresees chaos unless something is done.
- In Defense of Japan** (To convince)  
By an admirer of courage and efficiency.



**The Value of a College Theatre** (To convince)

By a student of theatre history.

**Our Crazy Traffic Laws** (To impress)

By a student who has been fined in seven states.

**Are Fraternities a Bad Influence in College Life?** (To convince)

By a student who has resigned from one.

**The Next World War** (To impress)

By a would-be prophet.

**How Books Are Bound** (To enlighten)

By the son of a bookbinder.

**Government By Propaganda** (To impress)

By an observer of modern trends.

**Is the Jury System a Failure?** (To convince)

By a student who has seen justice miscarry.

**Should Foreign Missions Be Suppressed?** (To convince)

By one who thinks them an impertinence.

**The Bigotry of Atheism** (To impress)

By an agnostic.

**Unjust Taxation** (To convince)

By a student of economics and law.

**Are Co-Eds People?** (To entertain)

By a very cynical young man.

**The College Man's Religion** (To impress)

By a student who thinks for himself.

**What Is Literature?** (To entertain)

By a cynic who scorns "dry" classics.

**Progressive Education** (To enlighten)

By a graduate of a so-called progressive school.

**The Value of Etymology** (To impress)

By an admirer of accurate diction.

**The Sterilization of the Feeble-Minded** (To convince)

By a major in sociology.

**Some Queer and Unusual Books** (To entertain)

By a browser in old book stores.

**Should Private Schools Be Abolished?** (To convince)

By an exponent of democracy in education.

**Is the Closed Shop Principle Unjust?** (To convince)

By an opponent of union domination.

**The Civilized Savage** (To impress)

By a student of anthropology.

**My Pet Aversion** (To entertain)

By one who detests radio announcers.

**Is Persuasion Morally Wrong?** (To convince)

By one who doubts our right to influence others.

**What Is Courage?** (To impress)

By a student with a philosophical turn.

**Why I Believe In Immortality** (To convince)

By a student preparing for the ministry.

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## *Chapter Five*

### SPEECH COMPOSITION

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THE gathering of material is after all the easiest part of preparation; its organization into effective speech form offers a more troublesome problem.

The first essential in learning speech composition is to understand **outlining**. Every student assumes that he knows how to make an outline, but very few really do. To many students an outline is nothing but a hasty, formless jotting down of memoranda, in which large headings are vaguely supposed to represent leading ideas, and small headings minor ones. In such an arrangement there is no real logical or structural quality.

To make a good outline one must be absolutely clear in his mind as to the exact relationship between headings and sub-headings, and must conform to that relationship with rigid consistency. Different relationships may be observed in different outlines. In one it may be the relationship of division and sub-division; in another that of statement and amplification; in another that of assertion and explanation; in another that of proposition and proof. The latter scheme

is best for argumentative brief-drawing, but for ordinary outlining of speeches the relationship of division and sub-division is the most serviceable, and the rules and examples which follow are based on that relationship.

Most speeches call for three main divisions: Introduction, Body, and Conclusion.

The **Introduction** will contain all preliminary matter necessary for motivation, or for preparation of the hearer's mind in advance of the main discussion. The student should distinguish between a real introduction in this sense — a separate part of the speech — and an introduction that is merely a good beginning, a felicitous phrasing, of the first point in the discussion. The latter may not necessitate a separate heading in the outline.

The **Body** will cover the main substance of the speech. It will usually be much longer than the Introduction or Conclusion, and have more sub-headings. Instead of one heading, some outlines carry two or three, or even more, to cover the Body of the speech, titled according to their content. Personally I prefer the single heading, with as many sub-headings as needed.

The **Conclusion** will cover such recapitulation, or interpretation, or application of the main substance as appears to warrant a separate division of the outline. Here also the student should distinguish between a real conclusion in this sense, and one that is merely a well rounded phrasing of the last point in the discussion. Both Introduction and Conclusion should be omitted if not really needed.

In the further division and sub-division of the outline it will be found advisable to carry out the following rules:

1. Every heading and sub-heading should be clearly phrased to convey an idea of its content.
2. Every heading or sub-heading should have a serial number or letter.
3. Every heading or sub-heading in a series should be parallel in thought and form to every other in the same series.
4. Every sub-heading should represent a sub-division of the thought implied in the heading above.
5. The sum of all topics in a series of sub-headings should equal the topic in the heading above — *not* an addition to that topic.
6. No heading should appear with only one sub-heading — since it is illogical and meaningless to divide a thing into one part.
7. Each series of sub-headings should be indented at least a half inch to the right of the next higher series; numbers or letters in a series should be accurately placed in a vertical line; and the second and succeeding lines of a long heading should be indented more than the first.
8. The headings in the Body should show clearly the development of sequence and climax in the main thought of the speech.
9. Two ideas of parallel significance in the structural scheme, but unequal weight, should be given headings in the same series. The more important idea may be emphasized by order of climax, by further sub-headings of its own, by underlining, or by greater allotment of space; but it should *not* be given a superior heading in the outline. (Much foggy thinking is betrayed by the latter practice.)
10. An outline should be as brief as possible without loss of clearness, completeness, or structural soundness, but should not be skimpy or superficial.

Of the two sample outlines here given, the first — a typical beginner's attempt — shows a violation of every one of these rules, together with a general vagueness of thought and purpose. The second, while not a masterpiece in content, is structurally sound and violates none of the rules. The student will find it a profitable exercise to compare the two examples rule by rule.

## EXAMPLE OF POOR OUTLINING

### CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

#### Introduction

##### A. Importance of subject

1. Growth of crime wave

#### History of capital punishment

##### 1. Offenses formerly punished by death

- a. Sheep stealing, horse stealing, picking pockets, etc.

##### 2. Pickpockets formerly hung

- a. Pockets picked at hangings

Capital punishment now confined to first degree murder in most states.

##### a. Definition

#### Capital punishment ineffective

1. Supposed to be a deterrent but statistics show it does not deter

- a. Example of pickpockets above

- b. More murders in states that have capital punishment.

##### (1) Other examples

Capital punishment wrong

1. Based on revenge
  - a. Punishment should reform
2. Conclusion

## EXAMPLE OF GOOD OUTLINING

### THE FALLACY OF CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

#### I. Introduction

- A. Importance of the subject
  1. Spread of crime and racketeering
  2. Demand for more severe punishment of kidnappers, etc.
  3. Is capital punishment the best solution?
- B. Present status of capital punishment
  1. Abolished in some states
  2. Confined in most states to first degree murder
  3. Recently restored in some states for kidnapping
- C. Purpose of speech: To convince that capital punishment should be abolished

#### II. Body of Speech

- A. Theory of punishment
  1. Ancient: vengeance
  2. Modern
    - a. Reform of criminal
    - b. Prevention of repetition
    - c. Deterrent to others
- B. Capital punishment out of date
  1. Based on vengeance
  2. No idea of reform

## SPEECH COMPOSITION

3. Repetition preventable in other ways
  - a. Imprisonment
  - b. Re-education of offender
4. Not a deterrent
  - a. Pockets picked at hangings of pickpockets in England
  - b. Murder on increase in U. S.
  - c. Most murders in states that have capital punishment
  - d. Criminal does not fear death
  - e. Juries hesitate to inflict death

## C. Capital punishment a positive evil

1. Cheapens human life
2. Has brutalizing effect on public
3. Makes crime romantic
4. May do irreparable injustice through conviction of innocent persons

## D. Capital punishment morally wrong

1. "Thou shalt not kill"
2. Two wrongs do not make a right
3. State cannot give life, and should not take it away

## III. Conclusion: Let us urge our friends to vote against useless legalized murder

If the student has done well the work of gathering material, and has used the separate-leaf system of note-taking, the preliminary stages of outlining will resemble a game of solitaire. He will sort and arrange his notes, marking the piles with headings, discarding surplus material, filling in gaps, and rearranging until it is possible to transfer a fairly



coherent outline to a single larger sheet. The longer the outline is kept fluent and subject to revision, the more thorough the composition is likely to be.

The best outline is usually one that is complete and logical in structure, but not too binding in detail. The speaker should be free to make extempore changes to meet audience reactions. He should be master of his outline and not a slave to it.

Good speech composition involves all the problems of written composition, and demands the same qualities of clearness, force, unity, emphasis, and coherence; but it also involves many special problems of its own.

A speech, unlike an essay, is directed at a group, and involves a problem in crowd psychology. When a number of persons are gathered together they are strongly influenced by each other. They have less independence of thought and less individual self-control. Their emotions and reactions tend to become contagious. If one laughs, others laugh; if one applauds, others applaud; if one becomes restless and inattentive, others tend to become restless and inattentive also. This means that the speech must be designed to gain and hold the attention, not of some listeners, but of all. It must be clear, not to one, but to all, and all the time. It must contain enough repetition and reinforcement of ideas to combat distraction and forestall epidemics of inattention.

These problems will be analyzed in more detail in the chapters on Attention, Concreteness, Reinforcement, and Clearness. In general, the speaker must remember that speech composition is not a matter of getting objective ideas down on paper. It is a matter of planning actual impres-

sions to be made upon an actual audience. It should be thought out in terms of speaking, not writing, with the audience situation visualized in the imagination. Not self-expression, but audience response should be the guiding principle throughout.

The same speaker, preparing to speak on the same subject before five different audiences, would have five separate problems in speech composition on his hands, not one. The best possible composition for one audience might be the worst possible one for another. Before going far with the composition of any speech he should strive, therefore, to know as much about his probable audience, its mentality, limitations, prejudices, and desires, as possible. He should consider every heading and sub-heading in his outline in the light of that audience and its probable reaction.

Whether outlining or writing out the full text, he should try to avoid the more formal, literary attitude of the writer, and to preserve the brevity, directness, and simplicity of living speech. In the text he should avoid long periodic sentences, an over-abundance of polysyllabic words, and anything suggestive of a studied effect. In the outline he should avoid such formality of thought or stiffness of phrasing as may betray him into a lack of spontaneity in delivery.

“But,” says the student, “how shall I prepare my speech for delivery? Shall I write it out and memorize it? Or shall I write an outline and memorize that? Or shall I use a few notes and speak extemporaneously?”

The answer is that he should use the method best adapted to himself and to the occasion. My advice is to try everything at least once; to experiment and choose the best; but to experiment intelligently, with due regard to the advantages and limitations of each method. Some of the more obvious of those advantages and limitations may be set down here by way of suggestion, and the student may find others for himself.

The advantages of **writing out and memorizing** a speech are:

1. It gives the best control over details of language.
2. It permits economy of expression, the elimination of dead wood.
3. It insures the speaker against leaving out important points, or forgetting what he intended to say — *provided, always, that the memory does not fail.*
4. It provides a correct text for record or publication.

The **disadvantages** are:

1. The tendency of a written speech to *sound* written; that is, for the writer to employ the construction and phraseology of written rather than spoken English — his writing rather than his speaking vocabulary. Few students realize how different written and spoken English really are, not only in vocabulary but in construction and general style. Spoken language is less formal, less finished, less literary; it contains fewer complex and periodic sentences, but more simple and compound and loose sentences; it uses fewer strictly grammatical constructions and more purely idiomatic ones. It does not depend upon the written word alone, but leaves much to be conveyed by the inflection of the voice and the action of the body.

2. The difficulty of thinking when one is so busy remembering; the audience feels and resents the substitution of a memory process for an active thinking process on the part of the speaker.

3. The unreliability of the memory, and the fact that when it fails unexpectedly one is stranded.

4. The simple fact that memorized speeches rarely show thorough assimilation.

The advantages of **extemporaneous** speaking from notes or outline are:

1. It is spontaneous and genuine, even in its failures.

2. It sounds like speaking rather than reading.

3. It tends to make the speaker "think on his feet" instead of trying to remember what he thought yesterday or the day before.

4. It permits of instantaneous modification or adaptation to meet unexpected conditions.

The disadvantages are:

1. The tendency of many speakers to ramble, wasting time and words to no purpose.

2. The difficulty of being sure that nothing is left out in the excitement; that the speaker has really said what he intended to say.

3. The clumsiness and uncertainty of extemporaneous language.

4. The temptation to neglect preparation and depend on the "gift of gab."

5. The absence of a text for record or publication.

6. The difficulty of keeping within the time limit when there is one — a very vital matter, about which most students

are all too careless. To be cut off before one has reached his climax, or to be forced to make a hasty, lame ending, is to have one's speech utterly ruined; and there are many occasions in real life when one is allowed only so many minutes to speak.

It is clear that many of the advantages and disadvantages of both methods are conditional; that modification of method may increase or decrease them. Most speakers have found that some sort of a compromise is the best solution. For example, one well known speaker prepares by actually delivering his speech orally and extemporaneously to an imaginary audience, not once, but many times, until he has it whipped into such shape as to remove many of the disadvantages of the extemporaneous method. Then he writes it down, polishes it with a blue pencil, and finally memorizes it — although by that time it needs very little memorization. Another uses the same method, but improves upon it by having a stenographer take the speech down while he is actually delivering it to the imaginary audience. Both escape the worst disadvantages of both methods and preserve the most important advantages.

It is not, after all, the choice of method that is most important. In my own classes I do not think I can attribute ten bad speeches a year to thorough preparation by the wrong method; but I can attribute twice that number every week to *inadequate preparation*. The worst faults of the memorized speech show up most clearly in the speech that is only half memorized — and not half assimilated. The worst faults of the extemporaneous method show up in the speech that is extemporaneous in thought as well as in text. Thorough preparation by any method will remove

half the faults of that method. Wise adaptation to circumstances will remove the other half.

Whatever the method, there is one principle that is absolutely essential to adequate preparation for public speaking, and that is the principle of thorough **assimilation**.

The process of absorbing ideas is not unlike the digestive process. One first gathers articles of food (ideas) and puts them into his mouth (memory). The articles may be of many different kinds and from many different sources, but in the process of digestion they are gradually mixed and broken down through the agency of digestive fluids (mental associations and reactions), until they lose their original identity (authorship) and become a single homogeneous mass (composition). It is at this point—in the preparation of a speech—that most students stop. They have digested their thoughts but have not yet assimilated them. Food that is digested but not assimilated is simply foreign matter inside the body; it is not part of the man himself. It has yet to be absorbed into the blood stream. So with thoughts. One may have studied them, mastered them, composed them; yet they are not his own until they have been absorbed into the thought stream, so to speak; and they are not fit material for public speaking until they really are his own.

A common fault in preparation, irrespective of method, deserves special mention. That is the habit of preparing the first part of the speech too well at the expense of the last part. Nearly everybody falls into this natural error. The student would do well to drill into his head the de-

fensive maxim: "Prepare thoroughly the last part of a speech and the first part will prepare itself."

One more suggestion about preparation:

Let the student remember that the best way to work out his thoughts for effective public speaking is **by talking them over with somebody else**. He cannot prepare his speeches and he cannot prepare himself by sulking in a corner. Speaking is not an individual but a communal function. There may be human activities that can be learned in a hermitage through solitary meditation, but public speaking is not one of them. If the student is timid and afraid to meet people, his first task is to overcome that feeling in everyday life. To communicate effectively with other men he must know other men, and he must get used to the feeling of having them know him. To develop a thought most effectively for sharing with others he must seek the reactions of others to that thought. And to perfect himself in the useful art that is **expanded conversation** he must expand himself through conversation.

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## *Chapter Six*

### ATTENTION

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**E**FFECTIVENESS in public speaking is of course largely a matter of attention—that of the speaker and that of the audience—and there are one or two points about the phenomenon of attention which the speaker will do well to bear in mind.

In the first place there is no such thing as continuous attention. Attention is an instantaneous reaction resulting from an internal or external stimulus, and the only way of sustaining it is by renewing it with a constant series of fresh stimuli. “No one can possibly attend continuously to an object that does not change,” says William James.<sup>1</sup> **Fixation of attention is equivalent to destruction of attention**—a principle well known to the hypnotist, who induces sleep in his subject by getting him to fix his gaze on some bright object and to shut everything else out of his mind. The monotonous speaker does the same thing—unintentionally of course; he simply hypnotizes his audience into a state of coma.

<sup>1</sup> “Principles of Psychology,” Vol. I, p. 421.



The problem for the speaker is how to renew attention at frequent enough intervals. It would be a simple matter if he could follow the method used by the Pilgrim fathers in their churches. In their scheme of things the preacher who could not keep his congregation awake was assisted by a beadle, who, when he saw a parishioner beginning to doze off, applied the necessary stimulus to renewed attention in the form of a sharp rap on the head. The modern preacher, denied such assistance, generally resorts to the cowardly (but commendable) expedient of making his sermons short, so that his listeners do not have time to go to sleep. Some preachers — shouting evangelists of the exhibitionist type — prefer, metaphorically speaking, to rap their own listeners on the head by means of loud cries, gesticulations, and acrobatic “stunts” — which certainly serve the purpose of renewing attention, however they may stand with reference to good taste.

The speaker should realize that whatever his method he positively must provide a variety of fresh stimuli at frequent intervals if he is to maintain any sort of attention. How to do so he must learn by experiment, although he will find some hints in this and the following chapters. The first point is that any sort of monotony is utterly ruinous to attention because of the simple principle just stated.

Another valuable fact which the speaker may learn from the psychologist is that attention is of two kinds: involuntary and voluntary.

Involuntary attention, which the psychologist calls **primary attention**, is that which is generated spontaneously by an assault on the senses; as when a gun is fired, or when

a bright light suddenly flashes out of the darkness, or when a speaker shouts or pounds the desk. These are extreme examples; there are milder ways of getting involuntary attention through the senses. But whatever attention is purely physical and automatic belongs in this class.

Voluntary attention, or **secondary attention**, is that which results from concentration of mind, from the will to attend. It is intellectual, rather than physical, and is only to be relied upon in those of some mentality. The sort of attention which a student gives to his lessons in the wee small hours, with a towel around his head and a cup of coffee beside him (if students still do this), is secondary attention.

The would-be public speaker might just as well learn at the start that he can rely on very little secondary attention on the part of even the most intellectual audience, and none at all on the part of an audience that is stupid, or tired, or indifferent. Under the most favorable conditions he can expect less secondary attention from his hearers than a writer can expect of a reader. The reader gives his attention to a book when he feels most like it; he can choose his own time, place, position, lighting, and even the reading itself; he is accustomed to the idea of throwing himself actively into the world of the book; and he is less subject to distractions. The listener, on the other hand, especially when he is one of a large audience, is accustomed to being led; his attitude is passive rather than active; he yields himself to whatever stimuli are affecting the rest of the audience, whether those stimuli happen to be coming from the speaker or from some source of distraction.

The speaker must therefore school himself to rely upon his own power to secure primary attention, and to do so with such variety and frequency as to avoid loss of attention through monotony. Some suggestions as to how this may be done will be found in the chapters on Concreteness, Reinforcement, and Humor; but one hint has already been given in the discussion of the reciprocal mental relationship between speaker and audience. This is, simply, that a very large part of the speaker's power to hold attention is dependent upon his power to *give* his own. Unless he is himself clearly giving vigorous attention to his subject, to his purpose, and above all to his audience, he can hardly expect them to give attention to him.

A speaker is often said to experience a "clash of wills" with his audience; to dominate his audience by force of will power. In most cases he really dominates them by force of attention. Will power, if there is such a thing, undoubtedly plays a part, but indirectly rather than directly. The speaker's will keeps his mind on the subject, keeps him in an active state of voluntary attention. Through that voluntary attention he develops his own best effectiveness, and makes his strongest possible assault on the involuntary attention of his audience.

It is possible, of course, for a speaker to overdo this matter of will power — especially a speaker of unpleasant personality. It is possible for him to be so aggressive in forcing his attention upon the audience, and claiming theirs, as to become offensive; the listeners feel as if he were trying to jump down their throats. In trying too hard to hold attention he ultimately drives it away. There are people

who always talk in this fashion, whether in public or in private, and they are a great nuisance.

In the give-and-take of attention between speaker and audience, in the establishment of that reciprocal mental relationship, the eyes constitute the chief medium of communication. Through the use of his eyes the speaker conveys to the audience a sense of his own attention; through his observation of their eyes he experiences a sense of their response.

In giving attention he must remember to distribute it; to avoid giving it all to one person, or to one group, or to one side of the room, with the consequent effect of making the rest of his audience feel left out of the occasion. Neither a fixed gaze nor a vacant roving gaze will do; neither conveys a sense of communication to the whole audience. The speaker should look into the eyes of his listeners, one at a time, for a brief period only, shifting from one to another with pleasing variety and with approximate fairness of distribution. His eyes should meet theirs in focus.<sup>2</sup>

Because of the difficulty of doing this when one is self-conscious, some speakers fall into the habit of looking at the wall or ceiling, while others pick out friendly faces and make "hitching posts" of them. The former practice gen-

<sup>2</sup> There are dissensions from this point of view. One of the best teachers I know refuses to look at his audiences because he feels that it is "cheap and unworthy" to have audiences "hanging upon his words." He makes a practice of talking over their heads with his eyes fixed on the thought, which always seems to be hanging from the ceiling somewhere at the back of the room. He has fine things to say, a vigorous personality, and a powerful resonant voice; and he talks most of the time to students who are too busy taking notes to look up and watch him. It is my opinion that he is successful not because of the way he uses his eyes but in spite of it. However, he is certainly successful, and the student speaker will do well to examine the merits of both points of view.

erally results in weakening the speaker's own sense of communication, and consequently his effectiveness; the latter sometimes gives the speaker more confidence and improves his effectiveness with the few friendly listeners to whom he is directing his talk, but at the expense of the general attention. The ideal situation is for the speaker to discover that *every* face is a friendly face, and so to make a "hitching post" of every listener. When he does that he sometimes gets something very like a perfect state of attention.

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## *Chapter Seven*

### CONCRETENESS

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THE value of concrete illustration in any form of discourse is so well known as to amount to a commonplace. Any student who has taken a course in composition knows that concrete illustration is a great aid to attention and the best means of driving a point home.

But ask him what concreteness is; ask him to explain the distinction between the abstract and the concrete — and see what happens. I have asked hundreds, and have hardly ever found one who could explain accurately and clearly. This, of course, is normal; we use words every day of which we do not know the meaning.

If I ask ten students to explain concreteness, five will say that the concrete is specific, the abstract general. Apart from the fact that they can seldom explain the difference between the specific and the general, this is a poor explanation, because in the first place it does not explain and in the second place it is not true. The idea of good qualities, for instance, is general and abstract; but the specific idea of the quality of intelligence is equally abstract. On the other

hand, the general idea of green, sweet-smelling meadows and rippling brooks is almost as concrete as the specific idea of one particular brook. The distinction between specific and general is a matter of quantity, scope, or extent. That between abstract and concrete is qualitative, and psychological.

Three more of the ten will say that the concrete is that which is solid, heavy, closely packed, intensely unified. They have got their concrete mixed with Portland cement; they know more about road-building than about mental processes. Another student will perhaps confess simply that he does not know the distinction; and the last one will say that the concrete is the "tangible," the abstract the "intangible." He is approximately right — if he doesn't spoil it by proving in the next sentence that he does not know what "tangible" means. It means "touchable," and in that sense his statement is at least one-fifth true.

**A thing is concrete in proportion as it arouses sensory images;** in proportion as it creates a picture in the mind's eye, or a sound in the mind's ear, or a sensation of touch, taste, or smell.

The human mind begins, to all intents and purposes, as a blank. The infant receives sense impressions, but at first they mean nothing to him and provoke no response (except the negative, purely instinctive response to pain). Gradually, however, the child learns to recognize sensory stimuli as familiar, then to associate two or more of them together, then to re-create them in imagination, and finally to reason about them. This is the development of the thinking process, sometimes called the process of abstrac-

tion. From purely physical, or animal, impressions, the child proceeds by increasingly difficult steps of inference to the realm of pure thought.

Concreteness and abstractness are relative, not absolute, terms. A thing is concrete in proportion as it is in terms of the senses; it is abstract in proportion as it is in terms of the thoughts.

The senses are direct, physical, and involuntary. The thoughts are indirect, mental, and more or less voluntary; the more abstract they become—that is, the farther removed from the original sensory elements—the more volition they call for.

This is the point that is vital to the public speaker. The concrete, being in terms of sensory images, tends to claim involuntary or primary attention; while the abstract, being in terms of derived mental processes, calls for secondary or voluntary attention, which, as we have seen, the audience does not usually care to give.

That is all there is to it. The speaker wants attention. To get it he must, as a rule, do something that brings an involuntary response. The abstract thought processes are not involuntary, but voluntary; therefore he must either avoid them or so support them with concrete—that is, sensory—illustrations, real or imaginative, as to make the necessary assault on the sensory functions of his hearers. When he does so they listen. When he does not they go to sleep, quite regardless of the intrinsic value of what he has to say.

When you hear a speaker indulging in prolonged abstractions, watch his audience and see how lifeless they are.



Then see what happens when he says, "For instance: I once knew a man . . ." At the very sound of the words "for instance" you will see the audience sit up and brighten up. I have been able to illustrate this point to classes repeatedly by making them do that very thing.

Concreteness is the soul of attention, and it is a rare speaker indeed who can make himself interesting without it. Yet the inexperienced speaker constantly fails to make use of it — partly, no doubt, because he does not fully understand it, and partly because it is difficult to devise ways of being concrete without a certain amount of hard work. When he does remember to use concreteness he almost always uses it in its crudest form: that of the definite story or anecdote, used as an illustration or example, and not infrequently dragged in by the heels. Not that I wish to discourage the use of illustrative anecdotes — far from it! But one can be concrete in other ways also. The principle of concreteness can be continuously and unobtrusively applied by means of constant attention to **imagery** — by the use of such words and phrases in the very statement of abstract thoughts as will tend to stimulate the imagination, and to make one mentally see, hear, taste, touch, and smell.

But the speaker should remember that concreteness is personal and relative: what is concrete to one person is abstract to another whose experiences have been different. To an Eskimo a walrus is a more concrete idea than a kangaroo; to an Australian it is more abstract. Things are concrete to an individual in proportion as they come within his particular sensory experience of life. Things he has seen are more concrete to him than things he has merely

seen pictures of; but the latter are vastly more concrete than things he has merely heard about.

The motion pictures are doing much to increase the available sources of concrete illustration. Niagara, for instance, was once an abstraction to all but a fortunate few; now it is concrete to millions who have seen it in the movies; incidents of the World War will always seem more concrete to most people than those of any earlier war; Japanese children now seem to most of us just as real as our own, and surprisingly like them in movement and facial expression. But things that are too abstract to be pictured at all remain for most of us abstract.

The most telling sort of concreteness is of course that which brings the experiences of the speaker and those of his audience into closest contact. Things that they can visualize together give rise to the most intimate and sympathetic common interest, and lay the strongest possible claim to the attention of both.

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## *Chapter Eight*

### REINFORCEMENT

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THE student of public speaking must remind himself again and again that the speaker's problem is different from the writer's, and in some respects more difficult. Too often he imagines that it is only necessary to put what he has to say in the form of a clearly worded and well constructed composition, and then speak it out loud. He forgets that his business is not merely to express himself, but to impress his audience.

It is possible for a writer to put the best of himself into a book and then go away and forget about it; and no amount of indifference on the part of some readers will injure the quality of the book itself, or its effectiveness with those readers who are not indifferent. Some writers—like George Meredith—deliberately write for a select few, knowing that the general public will not care for what they write; but the knowledge does not embarrass them or interfere with their performance in the least. Sometimes they write even better for it.

A speaker, however, has all his hearers together in one

room, and is there himself. Any inattention, indifference, or hostility on the part of even a few of the audience endangers his effectiveness in two ways: It tends to become contagious and spread to others; and it tends to react on the speaker himself, diminishing his self-command, and consequently his command of the audience as a whole. If the writer feels any disconcerting reaction from his readers it is only after the book is done and out of his hands; but the speaker begins to get his reactions before he has fairly begun, and many a speech has been ruined because an indifferent minority demoralized the speaker.

There is only one way out: The speaker must shoulder the entire obligation of keeping everybody interested and attentive all of the time.

Of course some students will say that this is too hard; and if they feel that way about it, no doubt it is — for them. Nevertheless it can be done.

The chief obstacle is **distraction**.

Distraction is **primary attention gone wrong**. The listener finds his attention engaged by stimuli coming from sources other than the speaker — sometimes from within himself and sometimes from without. Occasionally the stimuli even come from the speaker, but from the wrong part of him — his hands or feet, for instance, instead of his head.

A listener is more subject to distraction than a reader. In his relaxed mood he gives very little secondary attention, but he is fair game for every stimulus to primary attention regardless of its source. Every time somebody coughs, or the door opens, or shuts, or the fire engines go past outside,

he is distracted. If he notices a mannerism or peculiarity of the speaker, he is distracted. If what the speaker says reminds him of something else, he is distracted. If the room is too hot or too cold, or the lighting is unpleasant, or the lady sitting next to him powders her nose too often, or a fly settles on the bald head in front of him, he is distracted. And every time he is distracted his distraction tends to communicate itself to those near by, and the contagion spreads. The reader, on the other hand, being in a more concentrated mood, is more nearly proof against this distraction. There are, as a rule, fewer sources of distraction about him, because there are fewer people; and even when there is plenty of distraction he has better means of fighting it. He can, to some extent, choose his own time and place to suit his mood, instead of having to fit his mood to the occasion. He can usually adjust the temperature and lights to suit him, and pick out the most comfortable chair; and if there is no comfortable place handy he can postpone his reading or go somewhere else. He can set his own pace, reading rapidly or slowly as he prefers; he can read much or little at a time; and when he is distracted, or when he is puzzled by the text, he can re-read as often as he pleases until he has mastered the passage or caught up the broken thread of the discourse.

Compare this with the plight of the listener, and you see why the speaker's task is not easy. In a large audience the room will be too hot for some and too cold for others; the lights will be bad for some; some will be too near the doors, others too far from the speaker; some will be in one mood and others in another; some near-sighted, others far-sighted;

some in good health, others in bad; some fresh, others tired. If the speaker talks rapidly he will confuse some of his hearers; if he talks slowly he will bore others; and except on the most informal occasions the listener who has failed to understand a point, or has been interrupted or distracted, will allow his attention to lapse permanently rather than make himself conspicuous by asking the speaker to repeat a passage.

Obviously the speaker cannot forestall all of these sources of inattention. Momentary distractions are bound to occur. He cannot prevent them; therefore he must counteract them.

Whole-hearted attention on his part will help; so also will directness and sense of communication; and so will concreteness. But most important in this connection is the simple device of **reinforcement of ideas**.

Audiences, though passive, are generally well disposed and rather anxious to listen. Given a fair chance they will recover from their distractions and renew their attention. But frequently the speaker does not give them a fair chance; he says everything just once, and leaves it to the listener to catch it if he can.

What student has not had the experience of coming into a classroom late and being unable to discover what the teacher was talking about until the end of the hour? A lecturer in the history of English literature, for instance, may mention the name of a writer just once and then talk about him for fifty-five minutes. In this case the late-comer will not be the only one in difficulty; unfamiliar proper names are always hard to catch on first hearing, and per-

haps half the students present will miss that writer's name. For a few moments they will listen eagerly in the hope of catching it on repetition, but if the repetition does not come, who can blame them for losing interest?

A really effective speaker reckons with this condition. He realizes that there is a constant leakage in his speech: some of his ideas are escaping some of his listeners all of the time. To counteract it he resorts to a piling up of effect, to a constant reinforcement of ideas, by more repetition and more illustration than a writer ever has need for.

Ideas may be reinforced in many different ways. Crude repetition is the most obvious; and it is by no means to be despised, especially in the case of proper names, pregnant phrases, or statements of fundamental import. Reiteration, or repetition in different words, is an excellent method of reinforcement and often a great aid to clearness. Concrete illustration, one of the most valuable methods, has already been discussed. Parallelism of construction is a method particularly useful in building up a related series of ideas. The use of figures of speech is often helpful in building up ideas without seeming to repeat them. Testimony — quotation of the opinions and observations of others — is a well known method, sometimes relatively overworked by students. And if nothing else will serve, plain "harping" is better than no reinforcement at all, although it is quite possible to harp on one idea too long, destroying much of the good accomplished. Sometimes a speaker will convince an audience and then spoil the effect by over-reinforcement, until the boredom engendered obscures the conviction or wipes it out altogether. But there is more danger of bore-

dom in the kind of harping that comes from vagueness, or lack of ideas, or from accidental repetition, than in that which comes from intentional reinforcement.

The method of reinforcement is a matter to be governed by circumstances; the principle is universal and essential. Because of distractions and because of the mental inertia of audiences, things must be pounded home. A well known and successful teacher of my acquaintance says that he never expects anything to sink in on his students until he has said it at least six times. He tries, of course, to do this as inoffensively as possible, and not to get caught at it. One may not wish to accept so strict a formula, but if he wishes to hold the attention of his audiences he must take account of distraction, and reinforce his ideas in some cumulative way.



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## *Chapter Nine*

### CLEARNESS

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THE necessity of clearness in a general sense may be obvious in relation to both writing and speaking; but effective public speaking calls for a rather special sort of clearness.

No comment is more often heard in criticism of a speaker than the simple question, "What is he driving at?"

Many a speaker, though clear enough in his remarks at certain times and at certain points, fails to carry his hearers along with him all the time. Every now and then they seem to lose the thread of his discourse.

Failure of the speaker to make his drift clear may arise from any one, or any combination, of a number of causes:

1. It may arise from an actual lack of unity in the subject matter. The speaker may really be talking about several things without any very clear idea as to which is the main thing.

2. It may arise from vagueness of purpose on the part of the speaker. He may have a unified subject, but no clear concept of what he is trying to do to his audience. This is one of the commonest causes.

3. It may arise from the failure of the speaker to define his subject at the beginning, when its obscurity or complexity makes such definition necessary.

4. It may arise from incoherence. The speaker may have a single purpose and single subject, but may so bungle the construction and arrangement of his speech that one finds it impossible to follow him.

5. It may arise from poor emphasis; that is, he may have his leading thoughts buried in inconspicuous places, or he may present them without sufficient heightening of manner, and so encourage his audience to miss everything of importance and to puzzle over the trifles.

6. It may arise from too much abstraction, creating mental friction for the listener and causing him to fall behind.

7. It may arise from a lack of climax; that is, the speaker may have failed to arrange his thoughts in the order of increasing importance up to the point at which he is ready to begin his conclusion.

8. It may arise from monotony. When a speaker lacks variety in pitch, force, tempo, or manner, it is easy for the listener to fall into the hypnotic state previously described, and in that state he naturally loses the drift of the discourse.

9. It may arise from over-glibness on the part of the speaker; words flow from him so freely that the audience is nearly drowned in the torrent, and loses all sense of direction.

10. It may arise from the speaker's own vagueness or uncertainty of mind, whether real or apparent; the speaker may seem to be feeling his way, hesitatingly, and with no firm grip on himself. The audience soon catches his spirit, wonders what he is driving at, and wonders if he knows.

11. It may arise from insufficient reinforcement of ideas, so that points essential to an understanding of the speaker's drift are missed by the audience, and not repeated.

12. Besides all of these fairly obvious causes, and many others, it may arise, and often does arise, from a much more elusive cause. The speaker himself may not feel sufficiently the *need* of making his drift clear. He may know his subject and his purpose well enough; his speech may have a coherence and an emphasis that would be perfectly apparent in a stenographic report; he may be making plentiful use of concrete illustrations, with variety and interest at all points; he may have what — on paper — would be perfect structure and climax, each idea having a function in contributing to the main thought, with the threads drawn together perfectly at the end; and still people may be yawning all through his speech and saying, "Well, well . . . what is he driving at?"

The fact is that there are ways and means of conveying ideas — or not conveying them — too subtle for analysis. What is on the speaker's mind somehow gets to the audience, though his words may not exactly convey it. If he allows his mind to wander from its main course, to stop and play with ideas by the way, to over-elaborate minor points, or to dwell upon himself, even though nothing he says is very obscure his audience will sense the state of his mind, and will lose consciousness of his drift, just as he does. But if he keeps constantly aware of his own objective, and alive to the necessity of having his audience follow him, he is much more likely to be clear.

Students are often troubled by this conception of clearness, confusing it with such things as unity, or climax.

If I stop a student in the middle of a speech and ask him what he is driving at, he is very apt to say: "Well, if I tell that now there will be nothing left to say at the end. I might as well stop speaking." It seems to him that he should keep something back in order to preserve the suspense. So he should. The audience does not ask to have

everything told at once; it does not want the conclusion at the beginning. But it does want to follow his drift; it wants to be kept aware that there is a conclusion, and that things are drawing towards it, and that everything is contributing to it and bringing it nearer. There is no anticlimax in that.

Another student, having finished his speech and having been told that he was hard to follow, will point out that everything in the speech really did contribute to the conclusion, and that he brought it all together in the end. But that is unity, not clearness. Clearness is not a matter of retrospect; it is something the listener wants to feel every minute of the time. Though hard to define, it is easy to feel — when it is there. When it is not, everybody squirms and murmurs, “What is he driving at?”

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## *Chapter Ten*

### HUMOR

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IT would be impossible for the public speaker to take his task too seriously, but it is quite possible for him to take it too soberly; and he generally does.

A student may be known at home as the village cut-up, and keep everybody in gales of laughter whenever he is out in company; but when he rises to speak before his classmates in college he behaves more like the village undertaker.

There seems to be a popular delusion to the effect that one must suppress the temptation to be humorous in order to appear dignified. It rests, of course, on a misconception of humor; people think of humor as something frivolous, even a little cheap, and are rather ashamed to give way to it. Those who make a habit of indulging in the cheapest types of humor in private are most apt to feel that way about it; they are unable to conceive of such a thing as dignified humor, being so used to the undignified kind. The really humorous speaker who keeps his audiences chuckling, yet at the same time earnestly appreciative, is generally found to

be a quiet soul in private life, incapable of silliness or rowdyism.

True humor is hard to define. Most people agree that it is something deeper than mere wit, or mere horseplay; that it is closely allied to pathos; that it is universal and human; that it is rather a matter of attitude than of things. One may drag in a joke, and perhaps raise a laugh, yet fail utterly of being humorous; on the other hand, one may talk sincerely of serious things with just a little whimsical, individual twist, and have his audience laughing and crying at the same time. The late Dr. Russell H. Conwell had a serious moral and philosophical purpose in his famous lecture, *Acres of Diamonds*; but he presented it so humorously and entertainingly that popular demand forced him to deliver it over six thousand times!

The most popular definition of humor is that which links it with a sense of **incongruity**. A sense of incongruity, in turn, must rest upon a **sense of values**, a sane, well balanced appreciation of the fitness of things—the truest and rarest sort of wisdom.

If this seems too broad a statement, think how many wise thoughts have been expressed with a touch of humor, and how many humorists have been rated as prophets in their wisdom. Dickens, Lincoln, and Mark Twain—to take three very different types—were all consistent humorists; and all three were philosophers, preachers, and practical reformers. Dickens wrote of the follies and the crimes of his day with a humor that ranged from the most genial to the most bitter, and he struck those follies and crimes a telling blow. Lincoln told ridiculously funny stories to illustrate

his most determined opinions; he was the greatest master of parable since Christ, and his parables were nearly always amusing. Mark Twain, kindly creator of Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn, has been called the most relentless and dangerous enemy of popular sham in recent generations.

Nobody expects the college student of public speaking to display the mature, well balanced humor of a Dickens or a Mark Twain, nor the leadership of a Lincoln. But there is no reason why he shouldn't at least be his natural self.

Watch a group of students conversing in club or fraternity rooms, or in the library, or on the athletic field, or in the classroom before the lecture, and you will see plenty of smiles and hear occasional bursts of laughter—even though you know them to be discussing matters that they take quite seriously. But watch any one of the same group doing his turn in the public speaking class, or taking part in a school or college debate, and note the difference! Young Americans will laugh their way through physical hardships, war, poverty, accident, illness, or sudden death; but they frown and scowl painfully through a debate on the tariff or the jury system.

Occasionally, to be sure, a daring student does come along and upset tradition by introducing a little humor into his speeches—not so much because of an inner urge as because he has been told that it is a good thing and is willing to try anything once. Generally he pursues the wrong course: he introduces the humor in order to be humorous, not in order to be clear, or natural, or illuminating. The result is that his humorous effort appears to be dragged in by the heels. The jokes may be funny, but they are irrelevant;

they exist as jokes, for their own sake, but they interrupt the flow of thought, and hinder more than they help. Moreover, the jokes themselves, introduced in this way for mere effect, are apt to seem strained, because the speaker, sensing their artificiality, becomes self-conscious about them and tells them badly, struggling hard to be funny and generally overdoing it to the point of being painful.

The kind of humor that is really worth while is the kind that grows naturally out of the thought — is really a part of the thought, not a piece of foreign matter. As I have already said, it is not matter at all, but manner; it is the speaker's attitude towards the matter; his angle of vision; his appreciation of the incongruities he observes. He may introduce a humorous anecdote to illustrate a point, but unless he has first felt the potential humor *in* the point his illustration is in great danger of seeming far-fetched. The most genuine and most effective humor in public speaking is that which manifests itself not so much in humorous stories and examples as in spontaneous twists of phraseology and flashes of imagination, and in a lively sense of connotation. The true humorist does not always have to drag in humorous anecdotes to illustrate his points; he is able to see that his points (or some of them) *are* humorous — that there are elements of incongruity in them that can be brought out. When he does use illustrations he is often able to do so by means of quick similes instead of roundabout stories; he uses the word "like" for a connective instead of a long palaver to the effect that "This reminds me of a story I once heard about a man who . . ." and so on. He does not hesitate to cite real particular instances in order to illustrate



a general truth, but he is very sparing indeed of far-fetched analogies and elaborate parallels intended to be merely funny.

Is it possible to learn to be humorous? Yes, and no. It is not possible to a person born obtuse, with no sense of values or relationships in life; nor is it possible to one who is congenitally ill-natured and intolerant. But for a normal human being, which means a human being with some sense of humor in him, it is quite possible. It is a question of bringing out what is there. Often self-consciousness is the chief obstacle; sometimes there is failure to understand other people. Experience, observation, and analysis will do much to remove both of these difficulties.

There are certain well-known elements of humorous appeal which are universal enough to justify thoughtful study. Among them may be mentioned:

1. **The trivial, but spectacular, mishap.** People of any nation or degree of civilization will laugh when a fat man slips on the ice. But their reactions afterwards will vary; and some will feel remorse at their unkindness, or shame at being caught off guard. People like to laugh, but not to feel ashamed of themselves immediately after.

2. **The downfall of false dignity,** as when a snob in a tall silk hat runs afoul of a snowball fight. These two elements are often associated, and some of the funniest scenes on the stage and screen as well as some of the funniest stories are dependent upon them. Both are subject to the same limitations, and provoke the same reaction of disgust when carried to the point of vulgarity or when repeated too often. The throwing of custard pies is no longer amusing to persons of ordinary maturity and decency, although it may still be used to entertain the children

and the feeble-minded. The downfall of *real* dignity is never amusing.

3. **Exaggeration, or hyperbole.** Not all exaggeration is humorous: often it is merely prevaricacious. But there is a way of exaggerating things with the tongue in the cheek which puts no false values on them, and rather serves to emphasize their real value by contrast. There is a fictional element in such exaggeration which is a strong stimulant to the imagination. Much of the humor of Mark Twain is based upon exaggeration; he will so over-state a truth as to make it outrageously absurd, yet somehow the truth is not lost. One laughs at his grotesque statement that he has seen at least a barrel of nails "from the true Cross" in the churches of Europe; but one does not miss his serious meaning, that somewhere somebody is shamming.

4. **Paradox.** The paradox has been defined by G. K. Chesterton, one of its greatest masters, as "the truth stood on its head to attract attention." It is a statement of thought by seemingly irreconcilable opposites, usually followed by explanation. Somebody has said, for example, that "the worst people in the world are those who go about doing good." Literally, this statement is self-contradictory and impossible. Humorously, its meaning is clear — and quite serious. Not all paradoxes are humorous, but the humorous paradox is one of the most effective.

5. **Irony, or sarcasm,** which is closely allied to the paradox in that it involves opposite statements; irony, however, implies an element of criticism which is not necessarily found in the paradox, and the opposition of statement is real rather than merely apparent. Paradox is a matter of form and irony a matter of intention. It would be paradoxical to say that "impromptu speeches are usually the best prepared." It would be ironical to tell a student that his supposedly prepared speech was "pretty good for an impromptu."

6. **Parody**; the presentation of absurd matter in serious form, particularly in imitation of the form of a serious thing already familiar, for purposes of burlesque. Almost every well known poem has been parodied many times. Poe's "Annabel Lee" for example has been imitated with marvelous fidelity to rhyme and meter in a set of nonsense verses entitled "The Cannibal Flea."

7. **Travesty**; the opposite of parody, consisting of serious matter presented in comic or degraded form. Parody and travesty are seldom carefully distinguished, and the terms are generally used loosely and interchangeably. Travesty is not by any means always humorous. Sometimes it is painful.

8. **Satire**; the comic treatment of a folly or abuse for purposes of ridicule; it may employ the methods of parody or travesty, but with an ironical and critical intention, an element of attack, not found in pure parody. It may be gentle or it may be severe, but the moment it becomes ill-natured and intolerant it ceases to be humorous. Generally, also, it ceases to be very useful to the public speaker.

9. **Grotesquery**; the distortion of natural objects in fanciful or bizarre ways for humorous effect. Like satire it ceases to be humorous when it becomes ill-natured, and the only reaction it provokes is disgust. It is seen at its worst in the cartoons of Germany, Sweden, and Spain; compare them with those of *Punch* or *Life* or *Collier's*, or with the good-humored comics of Fontaine Fox, and you cannot miss the difference. Good-natured grotesquery has a universal appeal; witness the popularity of the Sunday newspaper comics, or of the animated cartoons of the talking pictures.

10. **Irreverence**. American humor, particularly, is irreverent in spirit, not necessarily to the point of being blasphemous or offensive, but sufficiently to produce slight shocks and thrills; it is especially irreverent of custom, tradition, and secular

authority. America began with rebellion against authority, and has been more or less steadily engaged in it ever since; and the American people take a more exquisite delight in outraging authority than any other people — except, of course the Irish, to whom authority means England. And when a humorist can couple daring irreverence with a genuine attack on sham, as Mark Twain did, he is likely to be popular with Americans.

11. **Tolerance.** True humor is tolerant, although a spirit of tolerance is not inconsistent with vigorous attack. One may disapprove tolerantly; he may be merciless in his ridicule of human behavior, yet tolerant of the human being whose behavior he attacks. Scathing wit does not appeal; it may make an audience laugh, but it hardens them. It does not win sympathy for the speaker or his views; it may even win sympathy for his victim. The humor that laughs *with*, rather than *at* somebody is the kind that disarms opposition and gains sympathy.

12. **Individuality.** The very word *humor* once meant "individual bent, or trait of character." It is the little differences between individuals and individual points of view that *make* the incongruities of life and thought. He who would be truly humorous must be humorous in his own way. Not by imitating others, but by developing himself, will he learn the secret of genuine humor.

Such are the commonest elements of humorous appeal. The list is not complete, and, I confess, not very homogeneous, but it may be useful in a purely suggestive way.

A little study of these elements will show the speaker that incongruity is the common denominator. As a sense of incongruity rests upon a sense of values, the speaker's task is not merely to provide himself with a stock of jokes to

draw upon; it is rather to educate himself to a keen sense of the fitness of things and a lively appreciation of the incongruities out of which life is made. By this means he will learn to see the potential humor in his own thought processes, and to enliven them in a way that is really his own.

The speaker who has accomplished this has equipped himself not only to compose better prepared speeches, but also to meet more successfully the conditions of extemporaneous speaking; for a ready flow of genuine humor is the surest and best means of meeting many of the emergencies that are constantly arising—interruptions, accidents, heckling, and so on—and is almost the only means of meeting determined hostility. One of the most famous speeches of all time—the Liverpool Speech of Henry Ward Beecher—illustrates admirably the extent to which this is true. In his attempt to deliver that speech Beecher faced an audience that had come purposely to drive him from the platform. With unconquerable good nature and unfailing sense of humor he fenced and parried with his audience for an hour, meeting every emergency as it arose and compelling them to laugh with him, until at last he won himself a hearing.

A speaker who can do that will never be disconcerted when the lights unexpectedly go out, or a drunken man grows troublesome, or the audience develops an unexpected reaction. But he cannot expect to make use of humor in a sudden emergency if he has trained himself to avoid it on all ordinary occasions. To depend upon humor when he needs it he must train himself to see things more or less humorously at all times.

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## *Chapter Eleven*

### ARGUMENTATION

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A GREAT deal of public speaking is done for the purpose of influencing others in some way — by changing their beliefs, inducing them to perform some action, or leading them in some cause.

There are, roughly, two methods of influencing people, the rational and the emotional. Many psychologists insist that there is no real distinction; that reason and emotion are inseparably connected, and are both reactions of the whole man. Others say that the one includes the other; that an emotional response is a total response, and a rational response a limited one, confined to the intellectual centers. In any case, there is certainly a distinction in method of approach, and that is what we are concerned with.

The attempt to influence others by rational means is usually called **argumentation**, and the attempt to influence by emotional means **persuasion**. Both terms are loosely used; some people prefer to understand argumentation as covering both intellectual conviction and emotional persuasion; others to understand persuasion as the inclusive

term, with argumentation as a special phase, limited to the rational appeal. For the purposes of this chapter I shall define argumentation as **the attempt to influence others by intellectual processes; to convince by reasoning.**

Speeches which are devoid of everything except argumentation in this narrow sense are perhaps not very common; but every speech which has for its purpose **to convince** is basically argumentative, although the rational processes may be completely fused with the persuasive ones. With any audience but a coldly intellectual one such fusing is necessary and desirable; argumentation and persuasion work best hand in hand. But they can best be studied separately, the processes involved being by no means simple even then.

It would be impossible to cover the principles of argumentation in a single chapter, or even in a whole book the size of this one. A four-hundred-page textbook is hardly large enough to cover them thoroughly, and a one-semester course in argumentation is always too short. The student who would learn to speak effectively is advised to make an adequate study of argumentation at the earliest possible moment; if he cannot take a course in the subject he can at least read one of the excellent textbooks mentioned in Chapter XIX.

My purpose here is merely to suggest the basic nature of the reasoning process, point out one or two of the commonest pitfalls, and make a few recommendations for special study.

Most teachers of argumentation advocate a course in

logic to precede or accompany the study of argumentation. This is an excellent plan, and I heartily recommend it; but I recommend even more heartily a study or review of the subject of plane geometry. In plane geometry we see the rational process, not in theory but in practice; and we see it in its simplest and soundest form, applied to the materials of an exact science.

Consider this process as seen in geometry. We begin with **axioms** (self-evident truths) and **postulates** (statements so clearly derived from the axioms as to be universally acceptable), and proceed through a succession of clearly demonstrated theorems in the order of increasing difficulty. For the proof of each theorem we must have:

1. A **proposition**, which when proved becomes the conclusion.

2. **Materials of proof**, or facts in evidence, including (a) axioms, (b) postulates, (c) previously proved propositions, — but nothing else.

3. A clear **demonstration** (usually illustrated) of the reasoning process by which the mind infers the truth of the proposition from the truth of the facts in evidence.

In geometry, dealing as it does with exact materials, we see this process clearly in every theorem, no matter how difficult. In argumentation, dealing with human affairs in all their complexities and imperfections, we do not see it so clearly, but it is there just the same. There can be no true argumentation without it. In every piece of sound argumentation we have:

1. A **proposition**, which when proved becomes the **conclusion**.



2. Materials of proof, generally spoken of as the **evidence**.
3. A process of proof, or demonstration, generally spoken of as the **argument**.

The study of argumentation falls naturally into three corresponding parts:

1. **Analysis**: the study of **propositions**, and of the issues involved in them.
2. The study of **evidence**.
3. The study of **argument**.

In geometry there is very little need of **analysis** in the sense here intended; the proposition is by pre-arrangement simple and definite; there is only one issue, and that is the proposition itself.

But in argumentation the proposition is apt to be complex, and is almost sure to be obscured by masses of contentious discussion most of which has really nothing to do with the case. Before one argues he must find out exactly what he is arguing about, and to do so he must analyze. He must examine the history of the question, including the immediate cause of discussion; he must determine what the proposition really is; he must consider what others have said for and against it; he must sift this material out, eliminating what is irrelevant, what is admitted by both sides, and what he is willing to grant; and he must find the **issues** — that is, those points in the proposition which the affirmative must prove in order to establish a case. Finally, he must determine upon which of those issues to stake his own case.

This, in one paragraph, is the problem of analysis, a problem demanding months of careful study. The importance

of it will be seen in the fact that some cases practically prove themselves when once clearly analyzed. I think I can say without fear of contradiction that failure to analyze correctly occasions more disasters to student speeches than failure to argue plausibly.

A great deal is heard from student debaters about "burden of proof," and the strategy of shifting it. The only real burden of proof is the natural obligation which rests upon anyone who wishes to change an existing belief or policy to provide reasonable grounds for doing so. Such an obligation cannot be shifted to an opponent. The establishment of a strong case on either side of an argument does, however, create an equally natural obligation upon the opposition to admit its truth or refute it.

The sincere student of public speaking will do well to ignore the highly specialized game of strategy in debate, in so far as its object is to score points and win victories in an artificial contest. The object of argumentation in the real world is not to embarrass or dismay opponents, but to win converts, to convince other human beings that certain statements or opinions are sound. To prepare himself for this work, the student should learn to analyze propositions, not in order to discover their strategic points, but to understand what they really mean, and what honestly has to be proved in order to establish their truth.

The second study, that of **evidence**, is no less extensive than the first, but in a way it can be summed up in two simple principles: **No statement is of any value as evidence unless it is itself acceptable as true; and no**

statement is of any value as evidence unless it bears upon the question at issue.

In geometry one may use as evidence only axioms, postulates, and previously proved propositions.

In argumentation one may use as evidence only axiomatic assertions, assertions which, like postulates, are acceptable as true, or statements previously proved (or which the speaker is prepared to prove and does prove immediately). To use as evidence a statement that does not satisfy this rule is to build the structure of the argument on sand; sound reasoning from unsound premises is utterly valueless.

Given evidentiary statements which are acceptable as true, there still remains the question of their relative weight. Some kinds of evidence are more convincing than others. On this subject much may be learned from the practice of the courts, in which certain types of evidence — notably “hearsay evidence” — are barred altogether as untrustworthy; while certain other types, including casual or undesigned evidence, and evidence given against self-interest, are considered especially weighty. The student will find the chapter on evidence in almost any book on argumentation exceedingly helpful, and very fascinating reading.

The third study, that of **argument**, is the study of the reasoning process itself, and of the attempt to induce others to accept the reasoning. It is here that logic plays a part — or ought to. Unfortunately many students of logic seem to think of it as a pleasant game of charts on paper; something to amuse like a Chinese puzzle, or to develop the intellect, like chess. It never occurs to them that the syllogism, for

instance, is anything real; it would surprise them to be told that they use syllogisms every day.

All argument, like all reasoning, is either inductive or deductive.

**Inductive reasoning**, or generalization, is reasoning that "leads in" from particular premises to a general conclusion. Observing a number of particular instances in which a certain phenomenon occurs, the reasoner concludes that the occurrence of that phenomenon is a general rule. Observing that this man and that man and many other men have died, and that nobody seems to have lived beyond Methusaleh's nine hundred and sixty-nine years, we **induce** the conclusion that "all men are mortal," that is, bound to die.

**Deductive reasoning**, on the other hand, is the application of a previously accepted general law to a particular case; it is reasoning that "leads out" from the general to the particular. Having already accepted the general belief that "all men are mortal" we now apply it to a particular case, and **deduce** that "I am mortal," "you are mortal," or "John Smith is mortal."

In inductive reasoning, since we are concluding something larger than the premises—that is, more general—we can never be absolutely sure of its truth. We can only estimate its **probability**. We must seek to understand cause and effect, reasons as well as facts; and must base our conclusions on good sense and good judgement rather than upon rules and forms. The most common fault in inductive reasoning is hasty or careless generalization—"jumping to conclusions," as we call it in every-day English; and

the chief fault in inductive argument is expecting others to accept conclusions arrived at in this way.

Inductive reasoning, sometimes called the "logic of probability," is more universal and more useful than deductive, but it occupies less space in the books on argumentation because it does not lend itself so well to exact study. Depending as it does upon good sense and good judgement, it calls for preparation in the form of a well balanced all-round education.

Deductive reasoning, on the contrary, lends itself very well to exact and formal study. Since the deductive conclusion is something less than, and included in, the premises, it becomes possible to say, under certain circumstances, that the conclusion necessarily follows from the premises. Granted the truth of the premises, and the soundness of the reasoning, the conclusion *must be true*. This gives us a "logic of inevitability," which is not only interesting to study and stimulating to the mind, but exceedingly useful in building arguments that have a compelling quality of conviction.

The **sylogism**, technicalities aside, is simply the formal statement of a piece of deductive reasoning. It consists of a "major premise" which states the general law; a "minor premise" which defines the particular application to be made of the law; and a "conclusion" which states the particular truth deduced. For example:

All men are mortal; (major premise)

Bill Jones is a man; (minor premise)

Therefore Bill Jones is mortal. (conclusion)

or

All A is B; (minor premise)

All B is C; (major premise)

∴ All A is C. (conclusion)

There are several other forms of the syllogism — hypothetical, disjunctive, and so on — but the one given, known as the categorical syllogism because its three parts are all categorical statements, is the commonest and simplest. To be valid, or sound, it must answer the following requirements:

1. It must contain three, and only three, statements: a major premise, a minor premise, and a conclusion. Otherwise it is not a categorical syllogism.

The examples above illustrate the rule.

2. It must contain three, and only three, different terms: a major term, a middle term, and a minor term. Each must appear twice.

In the first example above the major term is “mortal,” the minor term “Bill Jones,” and the middle term “all men” in the major premise and “a man” in the minor. The fallacy of “four terms” usually occurs when the middle term is ambiguous; it appears to be one term, but is really two. Example:

Democratic people believe in popular government.

Tammany chiefs are Democratic.

Therefore Tammany chiefs believe in popular government.

3. The middle term (the one which occurs in both premises) must be “distributed” at least once — that is, taken in its complete or inclusive sense. “All men,” “all A,” “no B,” “the only wise men,” “everybody,” and “nobody” are examples of distributed terms. “Some men,” “a man,” “mortal” (meaning “some mortals” or “among those who are mortal”), “wise,” and “some B” are examples of undistributed terms.

The fallacy of "undistributed middle" is very common in actual discourse, and very deceptive. Two examples follow:

A good man should be elected President.  
The Reverend Samuel Brown is a good man.  
Therefore he should be elected President.

All great artists are breakers of tradition.  
I am a breaker of tradition.  
Therefore I am a great artist.

4. The major term, if distributed in the conclusion, must be distributed in the major premise. Otherwise the fallacy of "illicit major" occurs.

This fallacy is not common, for the major term is usually undistributed in *both* premise and conclusion, as in the valid syllogisms given above. In the following somewhat forced example, "mortal" is an illicit major:

All men are mortal (some mortals).  
No dogs are men.  
Therefore no dogs are mortal (any mortals).

5. The minor term, if distributed in the conclusion, must be distributed in the minor premise. Otherwise the fallacy of "illicit minor" occurs.

This is one of the commonest fallacies. In the following example "soldiers" is an illicit minor:

All who risk their lives are heroes.  
Some soldiers risk their lives.  
Therefore all soldiers are heroes.

6. If one premise is a negative statement, only a negative conclusion is valid.

This rule is not troublesome, and is seldom violated except in conjunction with some other fallacy.

7. If both premises are negative, no valid conclusion can be drawn.

The fallacy of "negative premises" occurs chiefly in rather lengthy arguments, where the parts of the syllogism are separated and concealed in many words. The following is an example of a common argument, boiled down to show the fallacy:

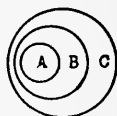
No grafting politician should be elected mayor.

Sam Hill is not a grafting politician.

Therefore Sam Hill should be elected mayor.

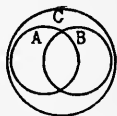
The student should study these rules until he is able to see that they are not arbitrary, but are merely formal statements of logical, inescapable common sense. It will help him to use the algebraic symbols (all A is B, all B is C, etc.), and to formulate fresh examples, valid and invalid, for himself. It will also help him to make diagrams illustrating his algebraic syllogisms, thus:

All A is B  
All B is C  
∴ All A is C



(Valid)

All A is C  
All B is C  
∴ All A is B



(Invalid)

Violations of the rules of the syllogism are known as formal fallacies, since they can be detected even in algebraic form. But there are many other fallacies for the discovery of which one must understand the subject matter. "Begging the question" is basing an argument on an unwarranted assumption. "Ignoring the question" is arguing



beside the point. "Argumentum ad hominem" is arguing personalities instead of issues. "Ambiguous middle" is really a formal fallacy of four terms, since the middle term has two meanings.

No one who wishes seriously to influence others by reasonable speaking can afford to be ignorant of these and many other fallacies. Their technical names are not fanciful ones invented by the teacher to play with in the classroom. They are established by experience and tradition, and stand for real errors of thought which one hears all about him in the trolley-cars and on the street-corners; and some of which every student of public speaking commits almost every time he opens his mouth. The mistake most students make is in supposing that errors in reasoning are easy to see and easy to avoid, and that all one needs is a little common sense. On the contrary, they are often plausible, tricky, and deceiving, and more than a match for "common" sense, which is, of course, a very poor sort of sense. What is needed is *uncommon* sense—*good* sense in the superlative degree—backed by a thorough knowledge of the wiles of fallacious reasoning.

One reason why the student should not neglect the study of argumentation is that it has some of the qualities of a boomerang. If you do not hit the other fellow with it it will come back and hit you. Once you have essayed to influence others by reasoning with them you must carry it through successfully, or the reaction will more than wipe out your advantage. It will leave your audience more thoroughly convinced than ever that they are right and you are wrong.

The student must bear in mind, also, that argumentation is not confined to formal debates, or even to speeches which as a whole have conviction as their purpose. In the ordinary give-and-take of all kinds of speeches there is continual argumentation, even though much of it is concealed. The speaker is being constantly required to answer the unspoken question or refute the unspoken objection as it occurs; to argue his way as he goes. To do so successfully he has just as much need of sound reasoning processes as he could possibly have in formal debate.

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## *Chapter Twelve*

### PERSUASION

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**N**OT to discount the usefulness of reasonable argument in its right place, one must none the less reckon with the fact that most human beings are more emotional than intellectual; that they are more readily influenced by their feelings than by logic. The speaker must therefore know how to persuade, as well as how to argue.

Persuasion may be defined as **the attempt to influence others by emotional means**; that is, by appealing to their instincts, feelings, or sentiments, rather than their reasoning powers. It is by no means to be thought of as limited to obvious emotional outbursts—to heroics, and “crocodile tears”; more often it is nothing but sincere feeling quietly interwoven with the thought of the discourse. It may even be interwoven with highly rational argumentation, in the sense that a sound argument may be put persuasively rather than repulsively.

Effective persuasion rests, of course, upon the speaker’s understanding and use of the instincts, sentiments, and feelings that actually exist in mankind. These are many and

complicated, and their relative power varies widely with circumstances. They will repay much study. But study alone will not help if the speaker is unsympathetic. Many speakers understand human nature and human motives, yet fail to persuade because they are cold and impersonal, or even contemptuous of the motives they pretend to appeal to.

Underlying all human motives are the basic instincts of **self-preservation** and **perpetuation of species**. Crude and obvious instincts in the lower animals, they manifest themselves in man with all sorts of disguises and refinements; but they are there just the same.

Self-preservation is the strongest motive there is, and it is less carefully disguised than perpetuation of species. "One must live," says the modern man as an apology for all sorts of selfish behavior. But he does not make the apology until he is cornered; he prefers, if possible, to deceive himself and others by pretending that it is the safety of his family or country that he is concerned about, rather than his own safety. Sometimes, of course, this is true; his instinct of self-preservation has given way to a higher impulse, growing out of his education or training. It is more apt to be true of civilized people than of brutish people; it is one of the attributes of a gentleman. It is also more apt to be true of everybody in times of emotional stress—in war time, for instance—than in times of sordid, humdrum commercialism. In war time even the lower orders of human beings will set self-preservation aside for the sentiment of patriotism or moral indignation. Always, however, there is much

more of the instinct of self-preservation in human motives than appears on the surface.

So likewise with the instinct for perpetuation of the species, except that this is almost always concealed, since education has taught us to think of the instinct itself as base. But we think very highly of some of the motives derived from this instinct, including maternal and paternal affection, love of home, the desire of each sex to appear to advantage in the eyes of the other, the chivalrous impulses of men toward women, the impulse of women to care for the weak or afflicted, and many others. The instinct has simply been refined out of its original semblance by centuries of civilization; it has not been destroyed.

These two basic instincts, in conjunction with educational influences drawn from history, tradition, religion, philosophy, literature, and law, have served to establish in mankind a great variety of impulses, so deeply rooted as to constitute automatic and powerful motives.

Next to the original instincts themselves, one of the strongest of these motives is the impulse to acquire **property**. It is often spoken of as an instinct in itself, but it is undoubtedly composite. Self-preservation is at the root of it, for human institutions have so developed that one must acquire some property in order to live. Love of adornment plays a part—originating perhaps in the sex instinct. The manifold pleasures that money will buy, the love of giving to others, the love of power, all contribute, each being composite in itself; and in addition there is undoubtedly a love of possession for possession's sake, which

is found in savages and increases, as a habit, with material civilization. But the great masses of mankind, barely able to meet the cost of living, are driven by the law of economic necessity to a greater interest in property than they might show in a more natural environment; and the speaker can make effective use of this when addressing an audience of hard-working, every-day people.

Next in strength, if not in prevalence, is probably the will to **power**. This is not felt so much by those who have never had their appetites whetted by the taste of power; but among a certain class of successful men-of-the-world it is almost the dominating motive. Men of great wealth and influence will quite generally tell you that they do not care about making more money for its own sake, or for what it will buy, but that they stay in the game of big business, or politics, because they enjoy the sense of control — control over other men, over systems or institutions, over forces greater than themselves. The impulse is not necessarily selfish; it is a form of aspiration, and has done much to stimulate real progress. It manifests itself in many different forms: in one man as the thrill of driving an automobile or sailing a yacht; in another as the genius of organization; in another as the brutish instinct of the bully. But it is conscious and cumulative in proportion to experience, and the speaker will find he can appeal to it most powerfully in an audience of fairly successful people.

Another strong motive is personal **pride**. One likes to be thought well of by others. This may be partly ulterior; a business man, for instance, may wish to preserve a reputation for square dealing as a means of encouraging trade.

"Honesty is the best policy" is a popular, if somewhat immoral, doctrine. But deep down in every individual who has felt the influence of civilized thought is a real desire to be held in good repute—even in those who have no particular ambition for fame or power. The cynical and worldly-wise often scoff at it and disavow it; they tell you they do not care what people think of them as long as they make money and keep within the law. But they will move into more select neighborhoods, send their children to fashionable schools, and be very bitter if black-balled at the Country Club. Such people are hard to persuade; any appeal to their pride must be skilfully disguised. But the motive is there.

Almost as universal as the motives so far mentioned, and the most powerful of all in some individuals, is the motive of **affection**, or personal attachment. Since it is largely an individual matter it cannot always be made use of by the speaker addressing an audience; yet there are times when the appeal to men on behalf of the women they love, or to parents on behalf of their children, will be the best possible means of persuasion.

It would not be possible, in a few pages, to discuss all the manifold impulses and motives of men. Devotion to God, love of country, sense of duty, loyalty to tradition, civic pride, sense of beauty, sense of gratitude, sportsmanship, esprit de corps, good taste, honesty, moral indignation—these are just some of them. The speaker's task is not merely to study them and theorize about them, but to make use of them; to appeal to them in his audience; to make his thoughts and opinions acceptable by bringing them into

harmony with the impulses most strongly at work in the audience.

The problem of persuasion is a constant one, and is with the speaker from the earliest stages of speech composition to the utterance of the last word on the platform.

In speech composition he must consider, in a broad way, which emotions and impulses to appeal to, what proportions of emotion and logic to use, and in what order to present them. A speech may be largely rational in its appeal throughout; or it may be largely emotional; or it may be both rational and emotional with the two appeals interwoven; or it may follow the classical model, with a short emotional introduction, a rational exposition, development, and climax, and an eloquently emotional peroration.

Experience seems to show that the classical form of composition is not so effective with modern audiences. The quick transition from logical argument to emotional peroration, which delighted the ancients and the mid-Victorians, is too much for the sophisticated audiences of today. They respond better to a skilful interweaving of argument and persuasion, with the emotional appeal concealed as much as possible. Neither the coldly rational speech nor the irrationally emotional one is particularly effective with most audiences; although if it comes to a choice between them more people will respond to emotion alone than to reason alone.

The type of audience, however, makes a great difference, and the student should learn to modify his speech accordingly, adjusting the balance between argument and persuasion for best results. Roughly, the more intelligent the



audience, the less it will respond to a purely emotional appeal. This is especially true if to intelligence is added some technical knowledge of logic and argumentation. An audience so equipped detects the emotional appeal and resents it, particularly in the form of a separate peroration.

It is important to note, also, that an audience favorable to the proposition is more responsive to a purely emotional appeal than a hostile, or even a neutral one. That explains political spellbinding, a highly irrational form of oratory customarily delivered to audiences of the speaker's own party, and very successful in stirring such audiences to a high pitch of enthusiasm — but utterly useless in winning converts from the opposition.

Special conditions aside, the best general rule in mixing argument and persuasion is to let the **matter** be logical, and the **manner** persuasive. No one resents hearing good arguments put sympathetically, tactfully, or even feelingly; but everybody who has the intelligence to detect it resents having his emotions appealed to at the expense of his better judgement. Good persuasion, in the long run, is not just the clever manipulation of inferior minds, the glorified bamboozlement of the crowd. It is the **tactful, considerate, engaging presentation of the best arguments one has to offer.**

In the actual delivery of the speech there are many elements which affect persuasiveness. Personality of course is one. The speaker has some effect upon his audience entirely apart from what he says — even before he opens his mouth to say it. The ancients called this effect **ethical persuasion**. Something in the speaker's appearance, car-

riage, manners, poise, facial expression, voice, or attitude predisposes the audience favorably — or unfavorably. They want to be persuaded — or they don't. But this is so much a problem of the whole man, his character, environment, attitude, and education that we cannot solve it here. Some speakers have naturally good ethical persuasion, and some do not; but any one can improve his own in the sense that he can improve himself.

A more specific quality that the speaker can certainly cultivate is **tact**. In a sense, tact is the negative aspect of persuasion; it consists not so much in an ostentatious appeal to favorable impulses as in a considerate avoidance of unfavorable ones, in putting unattractive or provocative truths inoffensively. Tact means "touch," the implication being that the tactful person is so delicately in touch with the feelings of others that he does not do them violence. Although tact sometimes involves the so-called "white lie," I do not agree with the cynics who assert that it is basically a matter of deception. It consists, I think, mainly of two elements: good will, and imagination. The tactful person is sincerely considerate of others, and anxious not to hurt them unnecessarily. But good will alone is not enough; with the best intentions one may hurt others because he does not understand them. The truly tactful person is not only kind but imaginative, in the sense that he can put himself in the other fellow's place, and imagine how that fellow would feel if certain things were said to him. Tact is the golden rule of persuasion, and only an imaginative person can practice the golden rule.

Finally, the speaker who would be persuasive must cul-

tivate the virtue of **tolerance**; he must learn to appreciate the other fellow's point of view. Only by so doing can he hope to make the other fellow appreciate his.

None of these things can be learned in a minute, and none of them can be applied coldly, at will, and laid aside when not wanted. I share the cynic's scorn of the person who is tactful only when it suits his selfish purposes. The speaker who attempts it is inviting disaster; he is deceiving himself in trying to deceive others. One must play fair, and to do so he must make tact and persuasiveness habitual; he must live them, on and off the platform.

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## *Chapter Thirteen*

### VOCABULARY

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**I**T is often said that the "tools" of speech are **words, tones, and actions**; and the student may be wondering why I have postponed discussing these things so long. The reason is that while extremely important they are not fundamental. Good tools are always an asset; but they do not make a speaker any more than they make a carpenter or a dentist. One may have a beautiful voice, graceful gestures, and a superb command of the language, and yet be a hollow, artificial, insincere, and ineffective speaker; on the other hand, one may be a surprisingly effective speaker in spite of a poor voice or awkward gestures. Theodore Roosevelt, for example, was a powerful speaker, though his gestures were monotonous and his voice shrill. He had something to say and a sincere, vigorous way of saying it, and such a man will be listened to whether his tools of speech are in perfect condition or not.

But this is no argument in favor of poor tools. He who would do his own best must strive persistently to perfect his voice, gestures, and command of language, to the end

that they may become, not his masters, but his good and faithful servants. In this and the next three chapters are set down a few facts concerning these tools which may at least help to start the student on the right sort of self-training.

The command of language that a speaker needs is so largely a matter of his general education and of his training in composition and literature that it need not be fully covered here. But there are certain special problems of language which confront the speaker as distinguished from the writer, and these are properly our province. Some of them have already been discussed in connection with Concreteness, Reinforcement, and Clearness; others will be considered later in connection with Pronunciation. One problem, however, merits separate consideration — the problem of **vocabulary**.

Vocabulary, in the larger sense, includes phraseology as well as diction; it is the sum total of language material.

When a student talks fluently but incorrectly, using ungrammatical constructions and barbarisms of speech, it is evident that the fault lies with his general education. His only remedy is more schooling, more reading, more association with educated people. He needs vocabulary building by all means, but from the inside out — ideas as well as words. His difficulty is not specifically a matter of speech. If he is sensible enough to realize his deficiency at all he is not generally puzzled as to its nature.

But often a student comes to me whose difficulty is quite different from this. His general education and environment have been good, he perhaps writes very well, and he

seldom offends by vulgarities of speech; yet he is troubled on the platform by a failure of words. He stumbles, hesitates, and in desperation uses words and phrases that are painfully clumsy and inadequate. He knows they are inadequate, and his listeners know that he knows; yet he seems perfectly helpless. His vocabulary seems to be unequal to the expression of his thoughts.

He will come to me afterwards, disgusted with himself. "I can't understand it," he says; "I know what I want to say, but when I get up there the words won't come. I could sit down and write it easily enough, and never be troubled for words, but on the platform I get all fussed and rattled, and can't think of the right words to save me. What's the matter with me, anyway?"

Sometimes the matter is partly nervousness or self-consciousness occasioned by some misconception of the speaker's task, and always this may be a contributing cause. But the matter is chiefly a faulty **speaking vocabulary**.

The student may think himself fairly well equipped with words because he can write. What he fails to understand is that the writing vocabulary is one thing and the speaking vocabulary another.

There are really *four* vocabularies — a **reading vocabulary**, a **writing vocabulary**, a **hearing vocabulary**, and a **speaking vocabulary** — almost as distinct as four different languages. One may know four different languages, but know some of them better than others; and one may be able to translate better from, say, French into English, than from English into French.

Of the four vocabularies — reading, writing, hearing,

speaking — the first two are bound up with the visual sense, the last two with the auditory. The reading and hearing vocabularies are receptive, or sensory; the writing and speaking are active, or motor.

The four do not develop simultaneously, and are not constant in their relative proportions. The hearing vocabulary develops first; the child learns to understand some words before it learns to speak them. The speaking vocabulary is a close second, and develops in intimate relationship with the hearing vocabulary through the years of liveliest curiosity and keenest imitative sense — the years when a child repeats aloud each new word that it hears. But it never quite catches up to the hearing vocabulary.

The reading and writing vocabularies simply do not exist at first, even after the other two are well developed. They begin with schooling. At first they develop together, and indeed are almost identical; but from the time when the child first begins to read for himself the reading vocabulary begins to outstrip the writing, and the gap gradually widens. At the same time these two vocabularies rapidly begin to overtake the hearing and speaking vocabularies, and by the time the child is half way through the grammar school they have far outstripped them. In persons of considerable education the reading vocabulary may be two or three times as large as the hearing vocabulary, and the writing may be many times as large as the speaking.

It is the last fact that may account for our friend's predicament. He may have a large writing vocabulary (as well as a large reading one), but his speaking vocabulary may be small. In ordinary conversation he does not notice

it because one uses a very small vocabulary anyhow in conversation; but when he attempts to speak on more formal occasions, making larger demands upon his supply of words, the words simply won't come. He knows them, in the sense that he could use them easily enough in writing, but they do not come to his tongue and lips because he is not accustomed to speaking them out loud; he has no kinesthetic realization of those words — that is, he does not know how it *feels* to utter them.

The extent to which this discrepancy prevails is well illustrated when students of composition are asked to read their own themes aloud. Time and again they come upon words that they have used themselves, and used correctly, but which they are utterly unable to pronounce. A cynic might blame this difficulty on the popular habit of stealing themes instead of writing them; but he would be less than half right. I have repeatedly found students unable to pronounce words that they used freely and habitually in their daily writings; and I have seen them very much astonished to discover their inability. It had never occurred to them to be curious about the sounds of the words; the association had been entirely with the visual sense, not the auditory. The two are in different worlds.

Given a deficiency in any one of the four vocabularies, there are three ways of going about removing it:

1. By increasing all the vocabularies.
2. By widening the channels of association between them.
3. By adding directly to the deficient one.

The four vocabularies might be compared to four tanks containing unequal quantities of heavy oil, and having very



narrow connecting passages, allowing only a slight leakage from the higher levels to the lower. If no oil were added, the four bodies would eventually find a common level; but if oil were added often and in proportionate quantities the leakage would not be sufficient to overcome the inequalities, and some tanks would show a higher level than others.

Obviously, a low level in any one tank could be raised by increasing the quantity of oil in the others, and consequently the pressure at which the leakage took place; or by widening the connecting passages; or by pouring oil directly into the tank concerned.

In the normally educated person of college age or thereabouts, the level is highest in the reading vocabulary, and lowest in the speaking. But the passage between these two is the longest and narrowest, because the association is the least direct; one vocabulary is sensory and visual, the other motor and auditory. The widest passages are those between the two visual vocabularies and between the two auditory.

Keeping this analogy in mind the student should endeavor to analyze his own difficulties, and to remedy them in accordance with the suggestions given. Any exercise that will put words directly into the deficient vocabulary, or that will increase the association between that vocabulary and the others, or that will substantially increase the pressure in the others, will be beneficial.

For the improvement of a deficient speaking vocabulary the best exercise I know is thoughtful, wide-awake **reading aloud**, because:

1. It fills up the reading vocabulary faster even than silent reading, for one must read all the words instead of just "skimming"; and this increases the pressure in the largest tank.

2. It increases the association between the reading and speaking vocabularies, thus widening the most important channel of leakage.

3. It puts words directly into the speaking vocabulary, since the reader actually speaks each new word on first acquaintance, instead of merely hearing it or looking at it. By reading from many different authors with different vocabularies he can make this process very rapid.

The second best exercise, not always so readily available, but never to be neglected when the opportunity affords itself, is conversation with well-educated people, because:

1. It re-stimulates the imitative process of childhood; one hears others using good words and strives to do likewise.

2. It fills up the hearing vocabulary, from which words leak most easily into the speaking vocabulary.

The third best exercise is the habit of reading aloud whatever one writes, because:

1. It increases the association between the writing and speaking vocabularies, utilizing the two motor impulses in common.

2. It increases the association between the reading and speaking vocabularies, in some measure at least.

3. It strengthens the connection between the writer's own thought processes and the kinesthetics of speech.

Better than any one of these exercises is the judicious use of all three, under which a poor speaking vocabulary can hardly fail to improve. But in the performance of any or all of them it must be borne in mind that no good is accomplished by gazing at an unfamiliar word, wondering what it means and how to pronounce it, and then passing it up.

The student will never get anywhere unless he is willing to *look in the dictionary* now and then and learn something for himself. A student who hasn't ambition enough to provide himself with a good dictionary and use it is a spineless intellectual mollycoddle, and the sooner somebody tells him so the better.

One of the chief causes of vocabulary difficulty is the almost universal habit of superficiality. Life has grown so complex, and the student has so much to learn, that he does not have time to learn anything accurately. He learns to read too quickly, and reads too fast; he is content with approximate meanings, and hardly gets to know the exact meaning of any word in the language. He talks vaguely about socialism, democracy, art, poetry, jazz, beauty, education, communism, inflation, honor, capitalism, tolerance, futurism, progress, and so on; but if challenged he can hardly define one of these terms. Ask him to differentiate the exact shades of meaning in a group of synonyms — libel, slander, vilify, calumniate, insult, derogate, depreciate, asperse, disparage, malign, lampoon, traduce, defame, for example — and he is lost. In reading he is not conscious of how much meaning he misses; and in writing he has time to look up words when he needs them, or to reconstruct his sentences using the words he does know. But in speaking he often finds himself embarrassed for lack of the exact word, and must either use a painfully inexact one or stall for time. The only remedy is to cultivate, not only a larger speaking vocabulary, but a clearer and more accurate one.

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## Chapter Fourteen

### VOICE

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**L**UCKY is the speaker who possesses a good voice, whether he got it by accident of birth or by virtue of careful training in childhood. Not that the good voice will in any sense make him a good speaker — I cannot repeat too often that it will do nothing of the sort — but it will save him a great deal of bother and worry that would otherwise steal time from more important things.

For the singer, of course, voice is paramount. He must begin early and build constructively for many years, not merely to escape faults, but to realize positive beauties of voice for the interpretation of music. A good speaking voice, however, is not necessarily beautiful in this sense. It should be sufficiently so, of course, to fall pleasantly rather than unpleasantly on the ear. It should be free from such abuses as nasality, harshness, and extremes of pitch, because these things distract and annoy the audience; but it need not be surpassingly melodious. It should be flexible and responsive enough to convey the feelings of the speaker, but it need not be capable of operatic pyrotechnics. The chief

requirements are that it shall be loud enough and clear enough to reach a large audience easily; that it shall be free of all distracting qualities whether good or bad in themselves; that it shall be accompanied by distinct articulation; and that it shall be so naturally produced as to withstand fatigue.

Nature has given each normal human being the makings of a reasonably good voice, and practically every failure to retain such a voice is traceable to abuse of some kind. If human beings lived natural lives there would be little need for voice training, and none for voice correction, except as the result of physical accident. But we do not lead natural lives. We live indoors instead of out, breathing dust, gas, and carbon dioxide instead of pure air; we wear foolish clothes and abuse our stomachs, subjecting ourselves to catarrh, laryngitis, and bronchitis; we spoil our natural habits of breathing by squeezing ourselves with tight belts, vests, or corsets, and by sitting long hours in cramped and unnatural positions; and we impose upon ourselves — and our children — all sorts of artificial restraints and constraints in the use of the voice under the guise of social propriety.

The wonder is not that some voices are poor in quality or tire easily; it is that people of college age or older have any voices left. That they have is simply due to the marvelous persistence of Nature in claiming and reclaiming her own. Give her half a chance and she will set things right even after appalling abuse.

For the public speaking student of college age voice training is not a matter of creating something artificial that did

not exist before. It is a matter of correcting such abuses as have arisen and restoring the natural voice; and with a few fortunate individuals it is not even that.

Problems of voice include those of **breathing, vocalization, and articulation**. The latter, being acquired through civilization, is perhaps not a matter of voice in the physiological sense, and is therefore left for consideration in the next chapter.

Of breathing and vocalization it can be positively said that the correct method is the natural method. But what is the natural method? The only way to find out is to observe the behavior of the only truly natural people in the world: the children.

When a child feels the impulse to shout, his mouth and throat open wide, he sucks in a full breath, and he shouts. He puts his whole body into the effort, and for that reason he seems to feel no effort. There is no special strain in any one place. His breathing may be diaphragmatic, or abdominal — most teachers of voice insist that correct breathing is abdominal — but he is no more conscious of his abdomen or his diaphragm (of which he has never heard) than he is of his femurs when he runs. What is more important, he is entirely unconscious of his *throat*; no matter how loud he shouts and screams it never seems to feel uncomfortable to him, simply because his throat is quite relaxed and free from strain.

We marvel at the child's power to keep up the screaming and shouting all day with no apparent effect except physical fatigue. When we grownups shout a little we generally grow quite hoarse; and even without shouting many of

us who have to talk every day manage to maintain chronic cases of "clergymen's sore throat." We can be reasonably sure that most of the children will eventually acquire the same difficulties.

When does the change begin? It begins when we first say to the child, in defense, not of his voice, but of our own civilized nerves: "Sh! Don't scream so! You will ruin your voice. You must learn to talk quietly and politely." The child instantly becomes conscious of his voice. Instead of producing it naturally he now assumes a strained, artificial tone, restricting his breath, and constricting his throat. Through years of such treatment he goes on to develop a voice that is perhaps soft and polite in conversation, but that is produced at the cost of unnatural breathing and throat constriction. Then when he wants to use his voice more freely and vigorously, as in addressing a large audience, he cannot do so; he has forgotten how, and only succeeds in straining himself and going hoarse.

When a person has got into such a state there is only one way to get out. He must take himself in hand and correct the faulty habit. Most people are terribly afraid of habit; they would rather remain slaves to it than endure the hardship of fighting it, for in the early stages a fight with habit undoubtedly requires determination and hard work. But with intelligence and perseverance it is really much easier to change a habit than most people suppose, and the farther you go the easier it gets.

The first step, naturally, is to find out what is wrong. It is surprising how many people seem perfectly willing to omit that step, and to go floundering around wasting time

and effort to no purpose. Success in fighting habit rests upon clear and careful analysis of the situation, followed by concentration of effort.

The most serious vocal faults that I have found among students of public speaking are the following:

1. **Faults in breathing**

- a. Insufficient lung capacity, due usually to neglect of the habit of deep breathing.
- b. Breathlessness, due to the habit of speaking with the lungs nearly empty, and no breath reserve.
- c. Inadequate control of breath, due usually to some form of constriction that has resulted in a cramped habit of breathing.
- d. Fluttering, or temporary loss of control, due to nervousness.

2. **Faults in vocalization (tone production)**

- a. Breathiness; wasteful use of more breath than is necessary to produce a good tone, resulting in a thin, weak tone and in shortness of breath.
- b. Guttural placing; a habit of producing the tone too far back in the throat; usually associated with failure to open the mouth wide enough.
- c. Nasality; due sometimes to a habit of passing the air through the nose while speaking, and sometimes to complete or partial obstruction of the nasal and post-nasal cavities, interfering with head resonance. The latter is often a matter of growth or malformation, needing medical attention rather than vocal exercises.
- d. Harshness; discord, due to the presence of disharmonic rather than harmonic overtones. Since the voice has a strong tendency to reflect the feelings this fault is most



often found in irritable, or ill-natured, or ill-bred people. However, it is sometimes the result of disease, or merely of habit.

- e. Faulty pitch; too low, or (more often) too high.
- f. Flatness, or woodenness; due to a lack of sufficient resonance. Not so serious as some other faults, but limits the expressiveness of the voice, and makes it harder to hold sympathy and attention.
- g. Monotony, when a matter of vocal habit, especially monotony of pitch.
- h. Hoarseness; a symptom of chronic vocal abuse, sometimes caused by disease, but often a matter of imitation and habit. Very common with immigrant types and those who live among them.

This is a very rough list, far from complete, and possibly not very scientific; but it does include most of the vocal faults that have come to my attention in class and that are serious enough to interfere with the effectiveness of the speaker. I set them down here by way of warning, and by way of help to the reader who must shift for himself. But the diagnosis of faults in the individual and the prescription of corrective exercises is properly the business of the teacher; or, in the case of speech defects, the psychiatrist or the surgeon. For the treatment of the more obstinate faults the student will need expert help, and the teacher who is not himself a trained specialist in speech correction should refer the student to some one who is.

With or without the assistance of a teacher, the student who would correct his vocal faults should remember these safe and sane principles:

1. Good voice production is natural, easy, painless. The presence of strain or pain is a sure sign of incorrect method.

2. In good voice production there may be violent muscular action in the region of the diaphragm, but the throat is open and relaxed, and the speaker is unconscious of its existence.

3. Nobody can breathe badly twenty-three hours a day and then breathe correctly at will for purposes of public speaking. Good breathing must be habitual.

4. All problems of forming or correcting habit turn upon the fact that habit is cumulative; that every time you do a thing right you strengthen the good habit, and every time you do it wrong you strengthen the bad one.

5. A little regular practice at frequent intervals is better than sporadic orgies of practice.

The corrective exercises given below are few in number but are carefully selected to overcome the commonest faults. If properly done they should involve no danger of injury to the voice or the health. In making use of them the student should observe the following instructions:

1. Do not attempt to do all the exercises, but select — preferably with the aid of a competent teacher — the particular ones which seem to fit your individual case. Practice them carefully at least once a day, five or ten minutes at a time. Always stop and rest at the first sign of dizziness or fatigue. Never persist in an exercise that gives you a sense of strain or discomfort, especially in the throat; if you cannot find out what is wrong seek help of someone who can. *The presence of strain in the throat is a sure sign that harm, not good, is being done.* If you must strain something, strain the heavy muscles about the waistline.

2. Practice when you are in the mood for relaxation, yet are

not physically fatigued. Have the window open, if possible; at any rate avoid badly vitiated atmosphere. Stand erect, but with an easy natural posture, free from stiffness. Try to cultivate a sense of freedom and exhilaration.

3. If you happen to catch a cold or sore throat, keep up the breathing exercises, but omit the exercises in vocalization. Avoid abuse of the voice at all times; do not shout yourself hoarse, or sing beyond your range, or sing falsetto. Endeavor always to build up a healthy, vigorous body; good speaking voices are seldom found in individuals of poor physique.

4. No matter what other exercises you do, always begin with No. 1, and end with No. 2.

#### BREATHING EXERCISES

**Note.** — Correct breathing involves expansion of the waist-line as well as the chest, and great muscular activity at the center of the body; it involves all parts of the lungs, including the much neglected lower parts; and by a curious trick of nature you feel, when you inhale correctly, as if the air came up through your body instead of down through your throat.

1. **Exercise to wash out the lungs.** — Exhale slowly, bending forward from the waist with the arms extended towards the toes and the shoulders rounded so as to compress the lungs and force the air out. Empty the lungs as completely as possible without discomfort. Inhale to full capacity as you come back to the erect position. Repeat three times.

2. **Relaxation exercise.** — Inhale deeply, raising the arms over the head. Relax, and exhale slowly, simulating a hearty yawn, and letting the arms fall limply at the sides. Repeat three times.

3. **Exercise to lower the breathing center.** — Exhale, allowing the head to droop forward and the body to hang per-

fectly limp down to the waistline. Then, keeping the body and neck still limp, inhale deeply from the bottom upward (at least it should feel so) until the force of the air straightens the body and neck and lifts the head up to an erect position. Try to feel as limp as an empty toy balloon; let the air do the work of straightening you up, not your back muscles. Repeat six times.

4. **Breath reserve exercise.** — Inhale deeply. Exhale partially, letting only about one third of the breath go and keeping the rest in reserve. Inhale again to full capacity; let one third go, inhale again, and repeat six times. Rest a few seconds and repeat again six times.

5. **Breath capacity exercise.** — Fill the lungs by sipping a little air at a time in a succession of quick jerks, packing the lungs tight after each jerk, and letting no air escape. When the lungs are full, close the valve, so to speak, and hold the air for about five seconds. Then release it suddenly and relax. Rest before repeating. Repeat six times.

6. **Breath control exercise.** — Inhale in a succession of quick jerks as in Exercise 5, but avoid packing the air after each jerk; that is, avoid closing the valve in the throat. Hold the air instead by controlling from the center of the body, and as soon as the lungs are full begin exhaling slowly and evenly. Rest before repeating. Repeat six times.

7. **Diaphragm exercise.** — (To limber up the diaphragm and stimulate the lower lobes of the lungs.) Take a moderately full breath; then, using the nasal passages only, inhale and exhale rapidly and repeatedly like a dog panting. At first hint of dizziness, stop, relax, and rest. Then repeat.

8. **Expulsive exercise.** — (To assist in developing force of utterance.) Inhale deeply, then instantly expel the breath on the sound of *H*. Be forceful within reason, but do not turn yourself inside out. Do not attempt to empty the lungs completely. Be sure that the lower portions of the lungs play a part

in the expulsion, and that you feel the muscular activity more at the waistline than at the shoulders and neck. Repeat six times.

9. **Breath economy exercise.** — Inhale deeply. Prepare to exhale on the sound of *H*; then exhale so slowly that the sound is practically inaudible. Seek to make the exhalation very even, smooth, and gentle; so gentle that it will not extinguish a lighted match. Avoid all strain, and do not empty the lungs beyond the point of relaxation. Regulate by muscular control from the center of the body, and not by squeezing the throat. Repeat six times.

#### EXERCISES IN VOCALIZATION

**Note.** — Correct vocalization presupposes correct breathing, and depends also upon freedom from throat strain and fullness of resonance. With the aid of a piano determine your natural range of voice; then strike off two whole notes at the top and two at the bottom, and confine all your exercises to the middle portion remaining (unless instructed otherwise by a competent teacher). Choose the easiest tone of all as the starting point. Be easy on the voice at all times, avoiding strain and abuse. Do not shout yourself hoarse at the football games, unless you wish to make a deliberate and perhaps permanent sacrifice in the interest of school spirit. Do not sing beyond your range, even in fun. Do not use your voice when you have a sore throat, and remember always that pain in the throat is a sure sign that harm is being done.

10. **Forwarding exercise.** — Speak the following sounds naturally and in the given order: *Oo, oh, aw, ah, ă* (as in *at*). Repeat ten times. Note that the mouth tends to open wider with each sound in the series, and that the focus of the tone seems to move forward; the *oo* feels down in the throat, the *oh* in the back of the mouth, the *aw* in the center of the mouth, the *ah* in the front of the mouth just back of the teeth, and the *ă*

almost out of the mouth. When you have made certain of this feeling, speak the sounds in reverse order, striving to keep the tone forward in the mouth as much as possible without losing the quality of the vowels. Repeat five times.

**11. Humming exercise.** — (To assist in forwarding and to develop head resonance.) Take a full easy breath, and choosing a fairly low pitch hum a full round tone on the sound of *M*. Keep the tone well forward in the head, so that the bones of the forehead and upper jaw vibrate. Keep the lips barely closed, and note the tickling sensation at the point of contact, caused by the vibration. Repeat until you get a good tone easily. Then practice humming simple tunes this way, keeping always well within your range.

**12. Exercise to correct breathiness.** — Take a full easy breath, choose a comfortable middle pitch, and sing on *Ah*. Sustain the tone, applying the air very gently, and using as little as possible. Do not try to sing very loud; aim to increase the *purity* of the tone, just as a flute player would — that is, by applying just enough air at just the right pressure, and wasting none. When you succeed you should get a full clear tone, with good carrying power, yet with so little expenditure of breath that you can hold a lighted match just in front of the mouth without extinguishing it; you should be able to sustain the tone for twenty-five seconds on one breath. Repeat six times. Try a higher or lower pitch occasionally.

**13. Exercise to correct nasality.** — Hum a middle tone on *M*, well forward in the head; then alternate with a full open *Ah* on a continuous flow of breath. Then hold the *Ah*, and with the thumb and forefinger alternately pinch and release the nose. Note the variation of sound, if any. Now change the quality of the *Ah* tone until the pinching makes no difference in the quality. Practice this tone until you get it easily, still keeping the tone forward in the head. Finally, practice alter-

nating the two types of *Ah* tone ten or twelve times. (This exercise will not cure all kinds of nasality, but it will help diagnose your case. Do not fail to report results to the teacher.)

14. **Intonation exercise.** — (To correct the habit of talking in consonants only; helps also to correct breathiness and harshness.) Choose a common expression such as "I am very pleased to make your acquaintance," or "How are the folks at home today?" and intone it — chant it, half sing it. Do not stick to a monotone, but use a simple tune or melody on two or three easy notes. Change the tune with each repetition. Choose a different expression each day. Seek musical rather than emotional effect (Compare with exercise 15). Play with the selection. Be careful not to strain. Repeat ten times, and on the last repetition come back to a normal, natural inflection, speaking the selection as you would in real life.

15. **Exercise for expressiveness of voice.** — Select a short lyric poem, expressing some deep, or tender, or hilarious, or violent feeling, and read it aloud several times, aiming to throw your whole soul into it. Do not be afraid to exaggerate a little; put in plenty of "sob stuff" — tear the passion to tatters. Do the exercise when you are alone, of course; barricade your door and cut loose. Choose a different selection each day; run the gamut of emotions from extreme pathos to extreme mirth; but keep them distinct, and know which is which. Try to feel the emotion in each case, deeply and sincerely. Bring the tears to your own eyes by the sound of your voice. (Note that this is not advice to be followed in public, but a private exercise for voice training.)

16. **Pitch correction exercise.** — Take an easy sentence of your own and repeat it several times, speaking it naturally. Then *intone* it in a monotone, aiming to preserve the same average pitch as in the spoken sentence. This is difficult, but can be done after a little practice. Repeat until you have it.

Then find the key on the piano which corresponds to the pitch of the sentence. Strike the key, repeat the intoned sentence several times, and then strike the key below (if your voice is too high) or above (if your voice is too low), and intone the sentence on the new pitch. Repeat several times, experimenting with various pitches and cultivating a feeling for a more suitable average pitch.

✓17. **Exercise for force and variety.** — Shout each of the following syllables vigorously on a separate breath: *Hup, hee, hay, haw, hah, hoh, hoo*. Do not strain, however. Then take a sentence of expository or argumentative nature, carefully pick out the words deserving of emphasis, and speak the sentence, giving exaggerated force to those words. Give greatest force to the one word that seems to be the key word of the sentence. Repeat with other sentences. Pound the desk or lectern with your fist to emphasize your shouts. (But remember that this is an exercise, not a custom to be followed on the platform.)

Besides the common faults in voice *production*, there are some errors to be guarded against in the *use* of the voice. Some speakers with perfectly adequate voices do not speak loud enough, simply as a matter of habit or of poor judgment. Others speak too loud. A few speakers play with their voices; they seem to enjoy the sound of their own inflections, and indulge in all sorts of vocal gymnastics whether called for by the thought or not. But by far the commonest fault in the use of the voice is **monotony**.

Monotony is lack of variety. It is possible to vary the voice in pitch, force, tempo, or timbre, and it is possible to be monotonous in any one of these elements, or in all four. Monotony of pitch is the most distressing form of monotony, but it is also the easiest to recognize and guard against;



it is usually a matter of habit. Monotony of force is destructive to meaning and to climax, and generally arises from a lack of emphasis in the speaker's mind. Monotony of timbre is less noticeable than the others, but limits expressiveness. Monotony of tempo, or pace, is the most insidious form of monotony, and the hardest to deal with; it is one of the last faults to yield to training, and as a rule it yields *only* to training. A really skilful use of variety in tempo is one of the marks of the finished speaker.

Most of the vocal faults which are serious enough to interfere with a speaker's effectiveness are also obvious enough to be easily recognized. There is nothing mysterious about them. They call for sane criticism and diagnosis, followed by regular hard work for a long period of time. You cannot reform twenty-year-old habits in twenty minutes—or twenty days. But with a correct diagnosis and reasonably persistent effort almost any bad habit can be overcome in time.

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## *Chapter Fifteen*

### ARTICULATION

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**C**LOSELY associated with the problems of voice are those of articulation, which include, in a broad sense, those of **pronunciation** and **enunciation**.

**Pronunciation** is a matter of usage in the choice of speech sounds. Difficulties in pronunciation are of two quite different kinds: those arising from simple ignorance, and those arising from dialectal variations.

Those arising from ignorance may be solved simply and promptly with the aid of a pronouncing dictionary. The student who pronounces "awry" to rhyme with "gory" will find, on looking it up, that the word is "a-wry." If he does not know whether "slough" should rhyme with "cow" or with "cuff," the dictionary will tell him that it rhymes with "cow" when it means "bog," and with "cuff" when it means "to peel off." If he says "calvary" when he means "cavalry," or "irrevelant" when he means "irrelevant," or "pixture" when he means "picture," he should be taken firmly by the ear, led to the nearest dictionary, and required to repeat the correct pronunciation seventy-five times.

Difficulties arising from dialectal variations, however, are not so easily solved. Shall one say "lahff" or "la-aff" when he means "laugh"? Shall he say "gawt" or "gaht" when he means "got"? "Porrtterr" or "pawtah" when he means "porter"? "Heer" or "heah" when he means "here"? "Bin" or "bean" when he means "been"? "Dawter" or "dotter" when he means "daughter"? Each of these pronunciations is accepted usage in some part of the English-speaking world, and each sounds queer somewhere else. Which ones shall we say are "correct"?

Some people will tell you that the speaker should always be himself, and use the pronunciations that are natural to him. If he expects to spend his entire life in his native village this may be good advice. But if he expects to travel, to meet people from other regions, and to exercise leadership through speech, he will ultimately feel the need of a broader command of language than he is likely to have picked up in childhood.

Many Americans make a fetish of "naturalness" in speech. They deliberately refrain from improving their childhood speech in any way lest they be accused of "affectation." Schoolboys complain to their teachers that if they speak correctly at home or on the street they will be laughed at. We Americans are in many ways a brave people, but we are the greatest cowards in the world on that one point. We would rather be wrong than be laughed at. We would rather be thought crude, tough, ignorant, even vicious, than be suspected of putting on airs. In speech, any pronunciation slightly unfamiliar to the neighbors is rated an affectation, apparently on the ground that it is not natu-

ral, but acquired. We forget that no speech is natural. We are not born with it. It is all acquired. The only difference between "natural" and "artificial" speech is that the former is acquired by accident, when we are too young to exercise intelligent choice. We consider that a virtue.

The mistake we make is in supposing that we must be untrue to ourselves and disloyal to the home folks in order to advance ourselves culturally. The British solve the problem better than we by cultivating a bilingual attitude. The individual retains and cherishes his native dialect, and uses it when he is at home or among his neighbors. But he is taught in school a more cosmopolitan pronunciation which will enable him to travel and be received among people of other regions and classes, and to be understood; and unlike the American he accepts this second language appreciatively, and masters it.

In this country our dialects are not so widely different as in Great Britain; we seldom have actual difficulty in understanding one another. For that reason we hardly need a second language, and so get into the habit of supposing that we have only one. This leads certain over-zealous teachers to insist upon what they conceive to be "correct" or "standard" pronunciations, and to condemn local variants as "wrong," when after all they are merely local.

A language spoken round the world cannot be standardized to the point of a single correct pronunciation for every word. In every region there will be a dialect sufficiently distinct to be recognizable. We cannot create a standard English by insisting upon the swanky pronunciations of southern England as set forth in Daniel Jones's *Pronounc-*

*ing Dictionary*, or those of northern England with their mixture of Scotch, or those of the Boston Brahmins, or those of the Broadway actor, or those of the more numerous and widespread mid-westerners of America. Each standard is well established in its region, but out of place elsewhere.

What we can do is to recognize that certain pronunciations are national, or regional, or purely local; that some are preferred by educated people and others by the masses in the same region. We can learn to know and recognize other pronunciations than our own; with the help of the radio this is now becoming very easy. We can learn to be tolerant of the preferences of others, and to compare them open-mindedly with our own. We can accept or reject pronunciations on merit, rather than prejudice. We can gradually eliminate from our own speech, at least for use away from home, pronunciations that are essentially ugly, or too local for general use, or too heavily burdened with vulgar associations. We can, in short, become masters of pronunciation, rather than slaves to it.

The student who would accomplish this must depend, not upon a few mechanical exercises, but upon all-round alertness and observation. He must form the habit of listening to the speech of others, especially on the radio, and noting the variations. He may spend some time profitably in running over the common disputed pronunciations in the back of any ordinary dictionary. He may amuse himself by looking up some familiar words in Jones's *Pronouncing Dictionary*, and comparing the pronunciations given with his own. To do this he will have to learn the International

Phonetic Alphabet, but he will never regret having done so. He should certainly become familiar with Fowler's *Modern English Usage* — the sanest, most readable book on common language difficulties ever written. He should ask himself why he laughs at the speech of rough-neck or dialect comedians, and whether his own speech is free from the same blemishes. And whenever he decides to modify his own pronunciations, he should do so moderately and gradually, for it is the sudden, radical change which is hard to accomplish without self-consciousness and apparent affectation.

**Enunciation** is not a matter of usage, but of clarity. Good enunciation is clear utterance. A word may be correctly pronounced but poorly enunciated, or it may be mispronounced but clearly enunciated. The one is a matter of knowledge, the other a matter of skill.

For clear enunciation good breathing and good vocalization are prerequisite. There must be enough breath to carry the tones and to articulate the consonants, and to project both to the audience. There must be strong enough and pure enough tone to differentiate the vowels, and to sustain the syllables for the proper duration.

A vowel is a tone — that is, a sustained vocal sound. A consonant is a noise, or combination of noises, too complex to be recognized as a tone. Some consonants, like *r*, *l*, and *m*, are made by mixing a tone with interfering noise. Others, like *s* and *sh*, are made by continued rush of air, or hissing, without vocal tone. Others, like *p*, *t*, and *k*, are made by exploding confined air. Still others combine two or more of these noises.

For good enunciation the different types of consonants must be clearly differentiated, and when the room is large they must be given extra force, since many consonants do not carry as distinctly as vowels. The mumbler hears his own consonants — or thinks he does — and he supposes that anybody within range of his voice can hear them. But his audience hears only a blurred murmur of tones, and cannot distinguish words or syllables.

Among the most common faults in enunciation are:

a. Lip-laziness; plain, all-round slovenliness in forming speech sounds, especially lip sounds. A national habit with Americans, and very common.

b. Mushy enunciation; talking as if the mouth were full of mush. May be due to physical causes, such as too much saliva, or to fatigue or brain fog. Sometimes just carelessness.

c. Slurring; failure to form clearly any sound that seems a little hard, especially combinations of consonants like *st*, *sp*, *pr*, *pt*, *kʰt*; also medial *t* as in “Tren(t)on,” “men(t)al,” etc.; also *ng* in present participles.

d. Habitual failure to finish sounds, especially final consonants like *t*, *p*, or *k*.

e. Habitual contraction of words and elision of syllables, as in “comp’ny,” or “tell ’em.”

f. Habitual insertion of extra vowels, as in “athaletics.” When this is due to ignorance it is a matter of pronunciation and vocabulary, but as pure habit it is bad enunciation.

g. Habitual difficulty with specific sounds, due to foreign birth. Common, and obstinate.

h. “Hot potato” enunciation. Due variously to nervousness, lack of saliva, poor breath control, or malformation, usually of the teeth.

i. Lisp, or tongue-tie; an actual impediment, due to minor

malformation. In all but extreme cases it is partly habit, and will yield to exercises.

j. Stammering, stuttering, or other serious speech defect. Usually due to subconscious emotional causes in the past history of the individual. Should be referred to a trained psychiatrist for expert treatment.

The student should realize that most faults in enunciation are matters of habit, and can be corrected by diligent exercise. But he should not make the mistake of thinking about his enunciation when actually on the platform. The exercises should be carefully planned as a separate activity, and done merely as exercises and not as rehearsals for a speech. On the platform he should think of his subject, purpose, and audience, and not of his delivery.

Endless variations of the following exercises may be worked out to fit individual needs. But these will serve to suggest the possibilities:

#### EXERCISES IN ENUNCIATION

**Note.** — The whole secret of enunciation exercises is in doing them carefully and slowly enough for accuracy. Think of the meaning, and let speed take care of itself. Seek frequent criticisms from the teacher, for you cannot judge your own articulation satisfactorily. If possible, have some one at home check you up constantly on both pronunciation and enunciation, especially on vowel quality. You need more frequent reminders than the teacher can give you.

1. **Lip and jaw exercise.** — Speak in rotation the syllables *ee, ah, oo*, exaggerating the lip movements slightly. Repeat ten times.



2. **Lip exercise.** — Speak in rotation the syllables *it, ip, ik*, distinguishing them clearly. Repeat ten times.

3. **Tongue exercise.** — Speak in rotation the syllables *are, oh, dee*, exaggerating the lip movements slightly. Repeat ten times.

4. **Lip and tongue exercise.** — Speak in rotation the syllables *kew, pee, tee*, distinctly, with exaggeration, but without stiffness. Repeat ten times.

5. **Tongue and lip exercise.** — Speak in rotation the syllables *ell, oh, em*, exaggerating the lip movements slightly. Repeat ten times.

6. **Demosthenes' exercise.** — With two or three small pebbles in the mouth speak a fairly long sentence as clearly and distinctly as possible. Repeat until you have mastered the sentence. Choose a new sentence each day. This is an old and hackneyed exercise, originally intended to overcome stammering, but it is still very useful for all-round improvement of enunciation. The principle is very simple: to stimulate the will power and strengthen the control by increasing the difficulty to be overcome; it is the same principle the baseball player uses when he swings two bats just before going to the plate. You can design an exercise on this same principle to help you fight almost any bad habit.

7. **Exercise to correct "mushy" enunciation.** — Speak the following as distinctly as possible: *She shuns the seashore since she saw the sea shell shining in the sun.* Repeat ten times. Change every two or three days to a new sentence involving the consonants that tend to sound mushy. Aim always at freedom and clearness; never at speed.

8. **Exercise to correct slurring.** — Speak the following as clearly and distinctly as possible: *A statistician protests that the Constitution has been too frequently attacked.* Repeat ten times. Change every two or three days to a new sentence in-

volved the difficult combinations of consonants — *st, ts, pr, fr, th, kt, skt, dst, str, tr, tl*, etc.

9. **Exercise in finishing sounds.** — Speak the following as clearly and distinctly as possible: *Clayton kept a kind of cat, and Howard asked him for it*. Repeat ten times. Change every two or three days to a new sentence involving plenty of syllables ending in *t, d, k*, etc.

10. **Auxiliary exercise.** — With the aid of a mirror — or better, of a friend — practice silent enunciation and lip reading a few minutes every day. (Used alone this exercise will produce exaggerated lip movements; but used judiciously in combination with others it will help to encourage distinctness.)

The student should not do enunciation exercises unless he needs them, and if he needs them he should do them only until the fault is corrected. He should never carry on to the point of exaggeration, for nothing is more offensive than the speaker who makes a habit of enunciating every syllable with painful exactness and cramming it down your throat.

With enunciation, as with pronunciation, the training of the ear is half the battle. The radio is of enormous help, if the student will but listen discriminatingly. The microphone exaggerates and shows up both indistinct and over-precise enunciation. If the student can have a radio audition it will show up his own faults, and if he can arrange to have himself electrically recorded he can actually hear them himself.

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## *Chapter Sixteen*

### ACTION

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THE eye is quicker than the ear, and hence a better road to primary attention. It is easier to keep awake while watching a visual spectacle than while listening to a radio address; the visual sense is so much livelier than the auditory that one can relax, mentally and physically, and yet miss very little of what is going on.

People are actually more sensitive to what a speaker does than to what he says; and for a time the tremendous vogue of the silent motion picture intensified this condition by training the public to read actions rather than words. But the strongest appeal, of course, lies in a harmonious combination of both actions and words; which is why the "talkies" so quickly supplanted the silent films in the affections of all but the most intelligent people. The problem for the public speaker is to "suit the action to the word, the word to the action"; to be neither a phonograph nor a windmill, but a natural, life-like human being.

Of late years there has been something of a prejudice against **gesture** in public speaking, occasioned no doubt by

the absurdities and artificialities of gesture as taught in some of our elocution schools a few years ago, and employed more or less generally in church sociable "recitations" and high school declamations. People still remember with horror the base drum and semaphore arm movements with which a youthful "Spartacus" exhorted imaginary gladiators, to the delight of proud parents and the discomfort of embarrassed audiences. Better no gesture at all, they say, than gesture like that!

The trouble was that those gestures were unnatural, not because they were learned, but because they were insincere. However it is not true, as some people seem to think, that all gesture is unnatural.

The small child uses plenty of gesture. He does more: he uses **action** in the broadest sense. He talks with his whole body — with his hands, arms, feet, head, face, mouth, eyes, eyebrows, shoulders, and voice; and while certain high-strung persons may object that he is unrestrained, nobody ever accuses him of being unnatural.

The unnaturalness is acquired later. The child, having been taught to restrain his exuberance, becomes quiet, stiff, and unexpressive. As he grows older he forgets how to make natural gestures, and does not make any; or he makes silly little abortive ones from the wrist or elbow, checking them before they can develop.

His case is not hopeless, for, as already suggested, Nature will do wonders in the effort to win back her own if you give her half a chance.

But the elocution school method of gesture training did not give Nature half a chance. Natural gestures depend

upon a highly complex but entirely subconscious coördination of mind and body; upon the "whole mechanism," as the psychologists call it, working without conscious effort, as in the case of the small child. The elocutionist sought to substitute for this subconscious coördination a conscious coördination learned by formal drill and applied from the outside. He classified and named the gestures, practiced them carefully, selected the proper ones for each declamation, and memorized them with the declamation—or more commonly afterwards. Of course this method never produced naturalness or sincerity. How could it?

"Ah!" says the elocutionist, "but it would if it were learned thoroughly, for Art conceals Art!"

Nothing can conceal that sort of art, not even the genius of a great artist. The saying was intended for the Fine Arts, and it means simply that good artistry is less obtrusive than clumsy artifice. But the Fine Arts are frankly arts, conventionalized representatives of life, not realities; they call for artistry where public speaking calls for sincere actuality.

In a normal, natural, genuine function of life like public speaking, where everything is real, and where complete sincerity is the great virtue, you cannot plaster Art on from the outside and expect it to conceal the fact that it is Art. You cannot give an artistic imitation of public speaking and fool people—actually deceive them—into thinking it is real; not unless you are a born liar. The only technique that can possibly be helpful and at the same time sincere and genuine is that which is developed from the inside out.

The speaker must have something to say. He must feel

the urge to say it. And then he must yield not merely his voice but his whole body to the task of saying it.

The small child does so. Therefore it is natural.

If the older person tries to do so, and yet fails to get a natural response — if his body does not naturally perform the necessary actions — it is because he has in some way suppressed his body through restraint. His only recourse is to remove that restraint; to restore the responsiveness of his body by exercising it wisely; and then to forget his body again and think of what he has to say.

I have said that his case is not hopeless, that Nature will help him recover his childhood ability, or at least as much of it as he needs. How then shall he go about it? By way of answer I offer the following suggestions:

1. Let him strive in every possible way to increase the pressure from within; that is, to so concentrate his attention on what he has to say and the necessity of saying it that he will forget himself and burst the bonds of his self-restraint. He can do this best by engaging in arguments and discussions, by speaking of things he is really concerned about, by allowing himself to grow enthusiastic or angry. His teacher can help stimulate his enthusiasm by giving response to his thoughts and encouraging the discussion. Once the pressure becomes strong enough the speaker's body will respond by *some* kind of action, at least intended to be expressive.

2. When the action so developed is expressive, and when it does not distract or annoy his hearers, it is right; and it is the duty of the teacher to let him alone. Self-conscious attention to things that are right should be avoided.

3. When the speaker's actions, though developed spontaneously from the thought, are inadequate or inexpressive because

of his acquired inhibitions, the teacher can help by calling attention to the things that are wrong. If the student can be made conscious of his worst faults but unconscious of his successes — or rather of the means whereby he achieves success — the former will become uncomfortable and the latter comfortable, and he will eventually learn to follow the pleasanter path.

4. If the student is seriously and persistently awkward, he should strive to limber up his body through the medium of good exercises — fencing, boxing, medicine-ball work, and setting-up exercises, including some good dancing steps. Such exercises, taken on the side, will do more to teach him gesture than all the mechanical gesture drill in the world.

5. If his chief difficulty is a strong aversion to gesturing at all, the same treatment will help; aided by the treatment prescribed to increase the pressure from within. But this fault is not so common as many believe, and is very rare in those who have got past the first difficulties of nervousness and have begun to feel comfortable on the platform.

6. Students persistently lacking in expressive action should be given exercises in pantomimic action. Acting charades are excellent for the purpose.

Those who really have something to say and the urge to say it seldom have any other difficulty with action than the one that Theodore Roosevelt had; namely, a tendency to settle into one or two habits or mannerisms. In a young student this fault can readily be corrected if the teacher will subject him to judicious criticism in such a way as to make him self-conscious about his mannerisms but not about his really good gestures. The impulse from within will then be diverted from the mannerisms to the more genuinely expressive actions. The only danger is that the self-conscious-

ness will be applied in the wrong place, and the good gestures checked; to guard against this the wise teacher will criticize external things sparingly, at the same time always emphasizing the thought.

The self-conscious student feels awkward on the platform, of course. "What shall I do with my hands?" he asks; and if the instructor tells him to forget them he becomes impatient and feels that he is being neglected. The instructor can tell him several things he should *not* do with his hands — he is probably doing some of those things already. But as surely as the instructor tells him what to *do* by way of gesture, he will thereafter do that particular thing stiffly and self-consciously; whereas by following the method suggested he will ultimately learn to do the same thing naturally.

When once the speaker has freed himself of his false mannerisms and acquired inhibitions, and has something urgent to say, he will say it, not alone with his voice, but with the expression of his face, with his eyes and eyebrows, with his shoulders, with the movements of his head and of his whole body, with changes of posture and position, with his feet, hands, and arms. And his audience will get what he has to say almost as much through his actions as through his words.



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## Chapter Seventeen

### PARLIAMENTARY SPEAKING

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SO much modern speaking is done under parliamentary conditions that some skill in the amenities of the deliberative assembly is a necessary part of the speaker's equipment. It is not possible in one short chapter to furnish a digest of parliamentary law; for that the student is referred to Robert's *Rules of Order* or Cushing's *Manual*. But a brief description of the parliamentary attitude and its usefulness to the all-round speaker may not be altogether amiss.

This is the age of organization, and although few groups find it necessary to practice the highly specialized ritual of the legislative body, some suggestion of parliamentary procedure is to be found in most meetings and conferences. Whenever a meeting has a chairman, the essence of parliamentary form exists; and it becomes the duty of each speaker to recognize that form, at least to the extent of addressing his remarks to the chair. As a corollary, he should refrain from addressing other persons, including his opponents, or should address them through the chair in the third

person: "The speaker who preceded me, Mr. Chairman, has said so-and-so. . . . I should like to point out to him that . . . etc." There is no particular harm in identifying a speaker by name if it is done in the third person; nor in addressing the audience *after* addressing the chair. Nor is there any need for a stereotyped form of address. It is the attitude that counts; not the phraseology.

When there is open discussion from the floor, and one wishes to join in, he too should address the chair, rising as he does so, and should wait for recognition before proceeding further. In a parliamentary situation he should abandon the schoolboy custom of remaining seated and waving one hand to attract the chairman's attention — a custom that exists nowhere in the world outside the schoolroom. Having obtained the floor, he should continue to address his remarks mainly to the chair, in the same impersonal manner as described for the platform speaker. The parliamentary attitude should not be exaggerated to the point of stiffness or absurdity, but it should never be allowed to lapse in favor of crudeness, ill humor, or bad manners.

To strike such a balance successfully, the speaker should cultivate, not so much a knowledge of parliamentary law, as a feeling for parliamentary courtesy. This is not difficult, if he can once grasp the essential nature of the parliamentary attitude.

The theory of parliamentary procedure is the theory of democracy itself. Its purpose is the harmonious conduct of business on a coöperative basis. Experience has demonstrated that if this purpose is to be fulfilled, certain funda-

mental principles must be followed, of which the following are most important:

1. Equality of participation.
2. Majority rule.
3. Right of debate.
4. Orderliness.
5. Suppression of personality.

The principle of **equality** is the only possible basis of equitable group action. Every participant — or every member, if it is an organized body — is understood to have equal rights and an equal share in the deliberations. Even the chairman has no superior right as an individual; he is merely charged in an impersonal way with the duty of presiding.

While the purpose of deliberation is to secure unanimous agreement if possible, it is obvious that differences of opinion cannot always be resolved. It is equally obvious that **majority rule** is the only equitable basis for ultimate decisions of policy. Minority rule would be special privilege, while a two-thirds or three-fourths rule would result in frequent deadlocks; and a deadlock under such conditions would really be minority rule in the negative. The only real objection to majority rule is the danger of hasty action by a very small majority.

The **right of debate** is the principle by which the minority is protected against such hasty or unfair action. The theory is that if all participants have full freedom of debate, a majority will ultimately be won over to the truth, and the will of the majority will best represent the considered opinion of the whole group, without injustice to any.

The principle of **orderliness** covers not only politeness and decorum, but orderly arrangement of business — a time for everything, and one thing at a time. Such a principle cannot be worked out into literal perfection; urgent matters must sometimes be considered out of turn. But it can be followed as a presumption, and every piece of business can be disposed of in some orderly way, at least temporarily, before yielding to something else.

It is by **suppression of personality** that the spirit of parliamentary courtesy is best preserved. When people refer to each other as "previous speakers," "colleagues," or "opponents," and speak to each other in the third person through the chairman, instead of personally in the second person, they seem much better able to control their tempers and remain good-humored.

These five principles are, it will be seen, closely interrelated; and all good systems of parliamentary procedure rest squarely upon them. It is evident that they cannot always be carried out to the letter, but whenever conditions necessitate some infringement, parliamentary usage dictates a counterbalancing concession or restriction to preserve the spirit of fairness. It is frequently necessary, for instance, to put some check on unlimited debate by means of a cloture rule; but since this infringes upon the minority's right of debate a two-thirds vote is usually required. When a routine motion, such as the motion to adjourn, is given high privilege because of its possible urgency, it is made undebatable, so that it may not be utilized to interrupt business longer than is necessary. This principle of compensation runs all through parliamentary law, and an understanding

of it is more useful than a great deal of memory work on forms, rules, and the like.

One should, of course, know at least the rudiments of order, even if not a member of any strictly parliamentary body. He should know how to make or second a motion, offer a resolution, obtain or yield the floor, report for a committee, or introduce another speaker. If called upon to act as chairman of a meeting, he must at least know how to award the floor, recognize a motion, conduct discussion, and put the motion to a vote. To serve well he must know the common subsidiary and incidental motions, and which of them have high privilege. No matter how informal the meeting, or how brief his service, he must remember that the chairman is an impersonal moderator, whose business it is to see that the discussion proceeds amicably, courteously, and fairly, but not to take part in it, or advantage of it, himself.

In the vast majority of parliamentary situations one will instinctively do the right thing if he has cultivated the right attitude. He may make faulty rulings, but he will not make a fool of himself; he will not lose his self-respect, or the respect of others. The speaker who is unparliamentary in speech, attitude, or manners is the one who incurs disrespect and dislike. I have seen a brilliant college debater, with plenty of parliamentary form and language, antagonize an audience by his way of sneering at an opponent; and I have seen an illiterate negro workman win respect in a discussion because he had an innate sense of parliamentary courtesy.

A knowledge of parliamentary law is, however, a great as-

set, and as a rule those who have it are the most pleasing and courteous speakers, even on informal occasions. Training in it is essentially a training in manners, for the whole conception of parliamentary procedure is one of **organized courtesy**, designed to facilitate the conduct of discussion and business in an orderly and agreeable way.

## MOTIONS IN ORDER OF PRECEDENCE

	<i>Time (and place) to adjourn</i>	
	<i>To adjourn</i> †	
	<i>To take recess</i> §	
	Questions of privilege *	
	<i>Call for orders of the day</i> § P. V. * † ‡	
	Questions of order * †	
	<i>Question of consideration</i> ⅔ * † ‡	
	<i>To read papers</i> †	
	<i>To divide a motion</i> §	
	<i>To withdraw a motion</i> †	
	<i>To suspend the rules</i> § ⅔ †	E. R.
	<i>To fix method of consideration</i> § P. V.	
	<i>To lay on the table</i> †	
	<i>The previous question (Gag.)</i> ⅔ †	
E. R.	To postpone to a certain day	
	To commit (refer to committee)	
	To postpone indefinitely †	
	To amend the amendment †	E. R.
	To amend	

## MAIN OR PRINCIPAL MOTION, OR RESOLUTION

*Italics indicate undebatable motions.*

E. R. indicates that some authorities give equal rank to motions within the group so marked.

P. V. Procedure varies; consult a text-book.

§ Not recognized by some authorities.

⅔ Two-thirds vote usually required.

\* May interrupt a speaker.

† No second required. ‡ Unamendable.

Note: Organizations wishing to use this chart should settle by special rule all the indicated disputes and variations.

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## *Chapter Eighteen*

### RADIO SPEAKING

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THE potentialities of leadership implied in public speaking have been enormously increased by the radio. The speaker of national prominence who used to address "large" audiences of two or three thousand, now speaks directly to millions of listeners at a time. He not only reaches more people than he could ever see — more, even, than would ever read his speeches in the newspapers — but he reaches them intimately and clearly, at short range, with the full human quality of his voice. This means inevitably that a great deal of the most important public speaking in the future will be done "on the air," and the student who would become an effective public speaker must include radio speaking in his plans.

There are several physical and psychological differences between platform speaking and radio speaking, and success in the one does not necessarily imply success in the other. The effect of gesture and facial expression, for example, is entirely lost on the radio; and a pause that might be effective before an audience will kill the interest of the radio

listener, or make him imagine that his set has gone dead. On the other hand, a precise, even tone of voice, that would seem monotonous on the platform, may be an actual aid to effectiveness on the air.

In the Hoover-Smith presidential campaign — the first in which the radio played a major part, though not the first in which it was used — Governor Smith, with his genial smile and his easy, varied, and spontaneous delivery, was much the more effective platform speaker. But Mr. Hoover, reading his manuscripts in a firm, dignified, repressed monotone, was more effective with the radio audience, and won the election. His advantage did not hold four years later against Franklin D. Roosevelt, an effective speaker *both* on the platform and on the air.

There are, of course, two entirely different types of radio speaking: one in which an audience is present and the microphone is incidental, and one in which the speaker is virtually alone with the "mike." Each type carries its own special problems.

When a speaker is addressing a large audience and **the microphone is incidental**, he will naturally give less thought to the radio listeners than to those who are present before him. Those present will certainly expect this, and to a certain degree the radio listeners themselves will expect it, for although they may greatly outnumber the visible listeners they will be sitting at home individually or in small groups, and will be more or less conscious of being eavesdroppers. They will not expect the speaker to modify his remarks to the neglect of his visible audience.

This is especially true when the speaker is a national



figure, and his remarks, though spoken to an audience, are really addressed through them to the public at large. In such cases the two appeals are so nearly identical that he can practically afford to forget the additional listeners on the air and speak only to the visible ones.

The inexperienced speaker, however, does not often find himself in such a situation. He is more apt to be addressing a limited, specialized audience; and if an open microphone is present it is for some special reason. He should ask himself what that reason is. Why has a broadcasting agency thought fit to install a pick-up? Is it a local station, or a national chain? Is the hour one when many, or few, will be listening? Is the radio appeal supposed to be to a limited number of special enthusiasts, or to a casual, curious public? What sort of people are likely to be listening? Are they different in interests or capacity from the visible audience? If so, are they numerous enough and important enough to warrant any radical modification of the speech for their benefit?

As a rule the answer to the last question will be No. Radio listeners are independent souls, who do not ordinarily tune in a speaker unless they have some good reason to be interested in him, or his subject, or the occasion; and who are quick to tune him out if they are not interested.

On the other hand, the mere presence of the microphone is evidence that the officials of the broadcasting company expect somebody to be interested; and if there is even a fair possibility of numerous, widely distributed listeners, the wise speaker will not wish to antagonize or discourage them unnecessarily. To avoid this he should observe a few points

of technique which will not seriously weaken his effectiveness with the visible audience:

1. He should avoid unnecessary uses of local terminology or allusion that would be lost upon distant listeners.

2. He should make exceptionally careful use of Reinforcement, to offset the difficulties caused by fading, static, or otherwise poor reception.

3. If he is addressing an audience of one race, creed, or political party, he should remember that his radio listeners are not all of the same persuasion.

4. He should avoid any great dependence upon gesture or facial expression to convey shades of meaning, or to piece out unfinished sentences. He should avoid especially the use of irony, which is seldom understood by those who cannot see the speaker's face. Television may, of course, change this.

5. He should try to put more of the fullness of his meaning into the tones of his voice than would be necessary for the visible audience alone.

6. He should refrain from excessive contrasts of tone: the speaker who breaks from whispers into sudden shouts is a total failure on the radio. Clear, even tones are usually best.

7. He should keep within reasonable distance of the microphone, restraining the impulse to rush about the platform.

8. He should avoid an extremely slow delivery, or very long pauses.

9. He should make an occasional reference to "our good friends who are listening in"; it warms them a little, and sometimes keeps them from tuning out.

10. He should avoid any suggestion of oratorical or evangelical tone; it may go with the visible audience, but the radio listener will tune out in savage disgust.

Much of the best and most important radio speaking is done **from the studio**, with no audience present except the announcer and the necessary officials; and it is likely that with the coming of television still more will be done that way. Under such conditions the whole psychology of the situation is changed, and radio speaking becomes a highly specialized form of address, quite different from platform speaking.

When the microphone is incidental, the speaker is usually several feet from it, speaking in full voice so that he may be heard by the visible audience; and although the listener may be quite close to his receiver, he hears the speech as if he were at some distance, and is always conscious that it is addressed to a crowd. But when the speaker is alone in the studio he is instructed to speak in quiet, conversational tones, with the microphone close to his lips; and the listener hears him as if he were in the same room. This creates an illusion of intimacy and informality; the speaker is the listener's guest, conversing with him in his own home. Crowd psychology ceases to play a part. The whole situation becomes personal and individual.

Under such conditions the good radio speaker is the one who can shake off every vestige of exhibitionism, and maintain the warmest, most sympathetic conversational quality. This sounds easy, but many good platform speakers have found it surprisingly hard.

Good public speaking is direct, reciprocal, and sincere. Speaking to a microphone is direct enough, but it does not seem altogether sincere; and it is certainly not reciprocal,

since the speaker can neither see nor hear his listeners and can have no clear idea of their response. This makes the microphone exceedingly terrifying to the inexperienced radio speaker, especially if he happens to be an experienced platform speaker. It is like facing an unknown danger in the dark. All the little signs by which he is accustomed to gauge the friendliness or hostility, interest or indifference of an audience are missing, and he is at a loss how to regulate his own attitude. Yet he must somehow contrive to make each listener feel that he is conversing directly with him; he must create an illusion of reciprocity where none really exists.

In addition to this he must speak accurately by the clock, for radio programs are timed to the split second. Also, he must follow a manuscript, since experience has shown that extempore speaking is not generally effective on the radio; moreover, some stations require a manuscript in advance for approval. These two restrictions make a natural, spontaneous manner hard to achieve; yet only a natural, spontaneous manner will succeed with the listener.

For effective studio speaking, the following suggestions may be found helpful, in addition to those given for use when the microphone is incidental:

1. The speaker should have a clear understanding with the production man as to how much time he is to fill. For a fifteen-minute period it will be from twelve to fourteen minutes, depending upon the time needed for announcements.

2. He should prepare his speech to the exact length required, and check the time in rehearsal, noting time points on the margin — every two or three minutes, preferably, and every minute for

the last five. This will enable him to regulate his pace with one eye on the clock. To guard against miscalculations he should have an optional paragraph or two near the end of the talk, which he can cut out without breaking the continuity if time grows short, or leave in if time is available.

3. In planning and composing the speech he should avoid every suggestion of bombastic, oratorical, or literary style. He should use simple or compound, rather than complex sentences. He should blue-pencil all long rhetorical periods, flowery, polysyllabic words, stilted literary phrases, rhetorical questions, contrasts or parallelisms, and everything suggestive of platform technique.

4. In reading his speech, he should strive to sound as if he were *not* reading it, but speaking it extemporaneously. Some speakers can do this readily enough, but others find it painfully hard. There are certain patterns of inflection and rhythm, heard in commonplace oral reading, that tend to become habits with a reader; these are hard to avoid, and especially hard when the language of the speech is too literary. Yet of all things they must be avoided. The speaker who has difficulty with them should study his inflections phrase by phrase, even going to the extreme of marking his pauses, and placing some of them out of agreement with the punctuation marks—as we do in extempore conversation. A mechanical process, this, to be used only as a last resort; but it is sometimes the only way to break up the equally mechanical sing-song of conventional reading.

5. In rehearsing the speaker should train himself to a degree of spontaneity by making slight changes or interpolations in the text as he reads. A little of this may even be done on the air, and a few experiences at it tend to give the speaker assurance, as well as ease and naturalness.

6. The speaker should avoid, if possible, extempore speaking on the air. Running descriptions of sporting and other public

events are the only radio talks that are normally extempore, and these are often saved from strain or "stalling" only by the use of some manuscript material during dull moments. Even experienced announcers find a live microphone a very embarrassing companion when, for the moment, they have nothing to say. And even when the extempore speaker does know what to say, he is apt to say it too slowly, with long pauses for emphasis or for clarification of thought; and such pauses are not only deadly on the air, but much more disconcerting to the speaker himself in the studio than on the platform.

7. The speaker should realize that the microphone exaggerates certain faults. It is very sensitive to variations in distance, and to all sorts of disharmonic sounds. It picks up noisy consonants, mushy sibilants, lisps, and asthmatic breathing, as well as accidental room noises, and emphasizes them out of proportion to the vocal tones. The speaker should therefore keep far enough from the microphone to avoid breathing directly into it, yet near enough to overbalance room noises; he should avoid rattling his manuscript, knocking against the microphone or stand, or coughing. If he has a defect of speech that is caught by the microphone he should set about correcting it, or stay off the air. I have heard many defects that were unnoticeable in conversation become offensively apparent in control-room auditions. Fortunately, the broadcasting companies keep most of them off the air.

8. Since the microphone tends to harden and mechanize vocal sounds, the speaker should speak softly and naturally, and be careful not to "push" his voice, or to strain for abnormally clear enunciation. This is one of the most important and difficult points. Nearly every beginner tries too hard to be clear, and only succeeds in being artificial.

9. To ease the stiffness of direct radio address, some of the broadcasting companies are experimenting with dialogue forms,

such as interviews, two- or three-cornered discussions, or informal debates. Several students working together can profitably try out such forms in practice.

10. The student should himself listen critically on the radio, taking note of the faults and merits of other speakers, and trying to analyze their methods.

These suggestions cover, of course, only a few of the salient points in radio speaking; but at least they give the student some idea of what the problem is. He should supplement them by further reading, by observation, and by frequent visits to the broadcasting studios. Radio is still in its infancy, though a lusty baby, and no one can predict with certainty where and how the greatest opportunities for the radio speaker will develop.

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## *Chapter Nineteen*

### SUGGESTED READINGS

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BY this time the student will surely have realized that public speaking is much more than a facile accomplishment to be learned casually and worn as a garment. In a sense it is the man himself; and to be the kind of man who can exercise platform leadership one must have something to lead with. He must have something to say; he must have ideas, background, associations, convictions, understanding; he must know his way around.

It is true that in certain limited circles crude or ignorant people do occasionally exercise leadership of the soap-box variety. But the leadership expected of the college graduate is enlightened leadership. It implies considerable education. To go very far with it the student must become a well-read man.

In the course of his early life he will read many more works than are listed below, and will properly read what he chooses. It would be absurd — and impertinent — for me to plan another man's reading for him in any comprehensive way. But as part of his general reading the student speaker



will find certain books or types of books especially helpful, because they bear either directly or indirectly upon the problems of the speaker or his particular needs in the way of background. The following list presents a brief and somewhat arbitrary selection of such books. From it the student may choose titles of special interest to him, or suggestions at least as to the type of reading he most needs.

### I. FOR THE FURTHER STUDY OF PUBLIC SPEAKING

**Note.**—The following does not purport to be a complete bibliography of speech subjects; it is merely a list of a few of the best books now available in each of the several fields most closely related to the student's problem of self-training in speech.

#### PUBLIC SPEAKING AND SPEECH TRAINING

**Winans, J. A.** PUBLIC SPEAKING

The best comprehensive work on all phases of the subject.

**Woolbert, C. H.** FUNDAMENTALS OF SPEECH

A scientific analysis of the speech function in all of its phases; indispensable to those who expect to teach.

**O'Neill and Weaver.** ELEMENTS OF SPEECH

An introductory presentation of the individual speech problem.

**Williamson, A. B.** SPEAKING IN PUBLIC

Comprehensive, and modern.

**Lawton, S. P.** RADIO SPEECH

The first comprehensive book on this subject. There will be many more.

#### VOICE CULTURE

**Lankow, E.** HOW TO BREATHE RIGHT

A little book of principles and exercises; very helpful.

**Shaw, W. W.** THE LOST VOCAL ART AND ITS RESTORATION

Written for singers, but valuable to speakers for its insistence upon ease.

**Curry, S. S.** MIND AND VOICE

The safest and sanest of the comprehensive books on voice.

**Mosher, J. A.** THE EFFECTIVE SPEAKING VOICE

A smaller book, with much condensed information.

#### LANGUAGE AND VOCABULARY

**Greenough and Kittridge's** WORDS AND THEIR WAYS IN ENGLISH SPEECH

**Fernald's** CONNECTIVES OF ENGLISH SPEECH

**Fowler's** MODERN ENGLISH USAGE

**Jones's** PRONOUNCING DICTIONARY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

**Krapp's** ELEMENTS OF ENGLISH GRAMMAR

**Phyfe's** EIGHTEEN THOUSAND WORDS OFTEN MISPRONOUNCED

**Roget's** THESAURUS OF ENGLISH WORDS AND PHRASES

**Wilstach's** DICTIONARY OF SIMILES

#### ARGUMENTATION AND PERSUASION

**O'Neill, Laycock, and Scales.** ARGUMENTATION AND DEBATE

The old Laycock and Scales revised, and the most readable book on the subject. Especially clear on fallacies.

**Foster, W. T.** ARGUMENTATION AND DEBATING (REVISED)

A good all-round book, widely used.

**Maxcy, C. L.** THE BRIEF

A useful study of both legal and argumentative brief-drawing.

**Winans and Utterback.** ARGUMENTATION

A modern text, informal and practical.

**Overstreet, H. A.** INFLUENCING HUMAN BEHAVIOR

A readable study of public opinion and leadership.

**Higgins, H. H.** INFLUENCING BEHAVIOR THROUGH SPEECH

A more specific treatment of persuasive speaking.

#### COLLECTIONS OF SPEECHES

**The World's Famous Orations** (10 vols., small). Ed. by W. J. Bryan

An inexpensive set containing most of the great speeches of the world, some abridged. Very few recent speeches.

**Modern Eloquence** (13 vols.). Ed. by T. B. Reed

A comprehensive collection, recently re-edited. Contains many recent speeches of great historical importance.

**Models of Speech Composition.** Ed. by J. M. O'Neill

The most satisfactory one-volume collection; 95 complete speeches, ancient, modern, and contemporary.

**Modern Short Speeches.** Ed. by J. M. O'Neill

Including many *very* short ones.

**Contemporary Speeches.** Ed. by O'Neill and Riley

Contains many famous speeches made since 1927.

**Prose and Verse for Speaking and Reading.** Ed. by W. Palmer Smith

Useful for practice in reading aloud.

ALLIED STUDIES DIRECTLY USEFUL  
TO THE SPEAKER

**Aristotle. RHETORIC**

The foundation of much that has been written since. Several readable translations.

**Jevons, W. S. LESSONS IN LOGIC**

The best known text in this subject.

**Cohen and Nagel. AN INTRODUCTION TO LOGIC AND SCIENTIFIC METHOD**

A very recent, competently done book.

**Coppée, H. ELEMENTS OF LOGIC**

An excellent book, clearer, more practical, and more readable than Jevons.

**Euclid. ELEMENTS OF GEOMETRY**

Two thousand years old, but the best book on the subject, and highly useful to the student of argumentation.

**Chauvenet, Wm. TREATISE ON ELEMENTARY GEOMETRY**

One of the best modern works.

**James, Wm. PRINCIPLES OF PSYCHOLOGY**

A famous treatise, full of knowledge directly useful to the speaker.

**Watson, J. B. PSYCHOLOGY FROM THE STANDPOINT OF THE BEHAVIORIST****Parrish, W. M. READING ALOUD**

The best book on a subject which is of direct use to the speaker.

**Quintilian. INSTITUTES OF ORATORY**

One of the most "modern" of ancient books on Public Speaking.

PERIODICALS

**The Quarterly Journal of Speech.**

The most important periodical on public speaking and allied subjects; indispensable to the teacher. Published since 1915 by the National Association of Teachers of Speech.

**American Speech.**

A journal devoted to phonetics, standards of pronunciation, and speech improvement.

**The Platform World.**

Trade journal of the lecture platform.

## II. FOR THE BACKGROUND EDUCATION OF THE SPEAKER

**Note.** — The titles here listed are intended merely to suggest some of the lines of reading most likely to assist the student in the sort of self-development without which a man has little right to claim the leadership of thought implied in public speaking. The regular formal textbooks which the student is most apt to meet in his various courses have been purposely excluded as taken for granted. No attempt has been made to cover each field completely; that is left to the textbooks. The books mentioned have been selected for their established greatness, or for their direct usefulness in furnishing thought-material, or for both.

### FOR HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

**Wells, H. G.** OUTLINE OF HISTORY

**Van Loon, H.** STORY OF MANKIND

**Thucydides.** HISTORY OF THE PELOPONNESIAN WAR

**Plutarch.** LIVES OF ILLUSTRIOUS MEN

**Grote, G.** HISTORY OF GREECE

**Gibbon, E.** DECLINE AND FALL OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE

**Carlyle, T.** THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

**Green, J. R.** SHORT HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH PEOPLE

**McMaster, J. B.** HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

### FOR SCIENTIFIC BACKGROUND

**Thomson, J. A.** OUTLINE OF SCIENCE

**Pearson, K.** GRAMMAR OF SCIENCE

Bacon, F. NOVUM ORGANUM, AND ADVANCEMENT OF LEARNING  
Max-Müller, F. THE SCIENCE OF THOUGHT  
Darwin, C. THE ORIGIN OF SPECIES  
Huxley, H. MAN'S PLACE IN NATURE  
Haeckel, E. THE EVOLUTION OF MAN  
Wiggam, E. A. THE NEW DECALOGUE OF SCIENCE  
Eddington, A. S. THE NATURE OF THE PHYSICAL WORLD

FOR POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, AND SOCIAL  
BACKGROUND

Plato. REPUBLIC  
Aristotle. POLITICS  
ECONOMICS  
Machiavelli, N. THE PRINCE  
More, Sir T. UTOPIA  
Rousseau, J. J. THE SOCIAL CONTRACT  
Smith, A. THE WEALTH OF NATIONS  
George, H. PROGRESS AND POVERTY  
Mill, J. S. LIBERTY  
Maine, H. S. POPULAR GOVERNMENT  
Spencer, H. PRINCIPLES OF SOCIOLOGY  
Bryce, J. THE AMERICAN COMMONWEALTH  
Keynes, J. M. THE ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES OF THE PEACE

FOR PHILOSOPHICAL AND RELIGIOUS  
BACKGROUND

The Bible. ANALYTICAL EDITION IN EVERYMAN'S LIBRARY  
Plato. DIALOGUES  
Aristotle. NICHOMACHEAN ETHICS  
POETICS  
Spinoza, B. de. ETHICS  
Paine, T. AGE OF REASON  
Drummond, H. NATURAL LAW IN THE SPIRITUAL WORLD  
Nietzsche, F. 'THUS SPAKE ZARATHUSTRA  
Schopenhauer, A. ESSAYS  
Lodge, Sir O. THE SURVIVAL OF MAN

James, Wm. HUMAN IMMORTALITY  
 Maeterlinck, M. THE GREAT SECRET  
 Chesterton, G. K. ORTHODOXY  
 Durant, Will. THE STORY OF PHILOSOPHY  
 Dimn  t, E. THE ART OF THINKING

## FOR LITERARY BACKGROUND

No brief list of the world's greatest books could possibly satisfy anybody, even the compiler; but I challenge the student to read the twenty-five here listed (or twenty-five better ones) without showing some signs of literary background.

The Bible, KING JAMES VERSION  
 Shakespeare's Plays.  
 Homer's Iliad.  
 Chaucer, G. CANTERBURY TALES  
 Bunyan, J. THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS  
 The Arabian Nights.  
 Cervantes, M. DON QUIXOTE  
 Fielding, H. TOM JONES  
 Defoe, D. ROBINSON CRUSOE  
 Goldsmith, O. THE VICAR OF WAKEFIELD  
 Burns, R. POEMS  
 Goethe, J. W. von. FAUST  
 Boswell, J. LIFE OF JOHNSON  
 Scott, Sir W. IVANHOE  
 Dickens, C. TALE OF TWO CITIES  
 Thackeray, W. M. VANITY FAIR  
 Tennyson, A. IDYLLS OF THE KING  
 Dumas, A. THE THREE MUSKETEERS  
 Hugo, V. LES MISERABLES  
 Stevenson, R. L. TREASURE ISLAND  
 Eliot, G. SILAS MARNER  
 Hawthorne, N. HOUSE OF SEVEN GABLES  
 Poe, E. A. TALES OF MYSTERY AND IMAGINATION  
 Meredith, G. RICHARD FEVERIL  
 Hardy, T. FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD

## III. FOR STIMULATION OF IDEAS

BOOKS (OTHER THAN FICTION) THAT  
SUGGEST IDEAS FOR DISCUSSION

Chesterton, G. K. WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE WORLD

Ferrero, G. ANCIENT ROME AND MODERN AMERICA

Roosevelt, T. FEAR GOD AND TAKE YOUR OWN PART

Bok, E. THE AMERICANIZATION OF EDWARD BOK

Mirrors of Washington (ANONYMOUS)

Stoddard, L. THE RISING TIDE OF COLOR

Russell, B. BOLSHIEVISM: PRACTICE AND THEORY

EDUCATION AND THE GOOD LIFE

Lewisohn, L. UP STREAM

Sanger, M. THE PIVOT OF CIVILIZATION

Kallet and Schlink. 100,000,000 GUINEA PIGS

Geddes, Norman Bel. HORIZONS

Lockhart, R. H. B. BRITISH AGENT

Lawes, L. E. 20,000 YEARS IN SING SING

Allen, F. R. ONLY YESTERDAY

Steffens, Lincoln. AUTOBIOGRAPHY

de Kruif, Paul. MEN AGAINST DEATH

Strachey, Lytton. QUEEN VICTORIA

MODERN NOVELS THAT SUGGEST IDEAS  
FOR DISCUSSION

Butler, S. THE WAY OF ALL FLESH

Poole, E. THE HARBOR

Gissing, G. DEMOS

Chesterton, G. K. MANALIVE

Sinclair, U. THE JUNGLE

Wells, H. G. THE WIFE OF SIR ISAAC HARMON

Lewis, S. ELMER GANTRY, BABBITT

Hutchinson, A. S. M. IF WINTER COMES

Churchill, W. THE INSIDE OF THE CUP

Galsworthy, J. THE FORSYTE SAGA

Dos Passos, J. R. THREE SOLDIERS

**Fitzgerald, F. S.** THE BEAUTIFUL AND DAMNED

**Rölvaag, O. E.** GIANTS IN THE EARTH

**Buck, Pearl.** THE GOOD EARTH

**Remarque, E. M.** ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT

MODERN PLAYS THAT SUGGEST IDEAS  
FOR DISCUSSION

**Ibsen, H.** THE DOLL'S HOUSE, PILLARS OF SOCIETY, GHOSTS

**Shaw, G. B.** MAN AND SUPERMAN, THE DOCTOR'S DILEMMA,  
SAINT JOAN

**Barrie, J. M.** THE ADMIRABLE CRICHTON, MARY ROSE

**Bennett, A.** MILESTONES

**Capek, K.** THE WORLD WE LIVE IN

**Galsworthy, J.** STRIFE, THE SKIN GAME, LOYALTIES

**Howard, S.** THE SILVER CORD

**Glaspell, S.** INHERITORS

**Tarkington, B., and Wilson, H. L.** THE GIBSON UPRIGHT

**Dane, C.** A BILL OF DIVORCEMENT

**Molnar, F.** THE DEVIL, LILIOM

**O'Neill, E.** MARCO MILLIONS, STRANGE INTERLUDE, MOURNING  
BECOMES ELECTRA

**Stallings, L., and Anderson, M.** WHAT PRICE GLORY

**Sherriff, R. C.** JOURNEY'S END

**Green, P.** THE HOUSE OF CONNOLLY

**Kelly, G.** PHILIP GOES FORTH

POEMS THAT SUGGEST IDEAS  
FOR DISCUSSION

**Wordsworth, W.** ODE ON INTIMATIONS OF IMMORTALITY

**Tennyson, A.** LOCKSLEY HALL

**Whitman, W.** LEAVES OF GRASS

**Thompson, F.** THE HOUND OF HEAVEN

**Hardy, T.** WESSEX POEMS

**Frost, R.** NORTH OF BOSTON

**Masters, E. L.** SPOON RIVER ANTHOLOGY



**Noyes, A.** WHAT GRANDFATHER SAID, FIVE CRITICISMS, TOUCHSTONE ON A BUS, A BALLAD OF THE EASIEST WAY

STIMULATING ESSAYS AND COLLECTIONS  
OF ESSAYS

- Emerson, R. W.** CONDUCT OF LIFE, AND OTHER ESSAYS  
**Eliot, C. W.** TRAINING FOR AN EFFECTIVE LIFE  
**Bennett, A.** HOW TO LIVE ON TWENTY-FOUR HOURS A DAY  
**Briggs, Le B.** ESSAYS ON COLLEGE LIFE  
**Benson, A. C.** FROM A COLLEGE WINDOW  
**Huneker, G. G.** ICONOCLASTS  
**Meredith, G.** COMEDY AND THE COMIC SPIRIT  
**Perry, B.** THE AMERICAN MIND  
**Chesterton, G. K.** THINGS I SAW IN AMERICA  
**Shaw, G. B.** THE CASE FOR EQUALITY  
**Bok, E.** WHY I BELIEVE IN POVERTY  
**Lindsay, B. B.** THE DOUGHBOY'S RELIGION  
**Maeterlinck, M.** DEATH  
**Modern Essays.** Ed. by Christopher Morley  
**Essays for College Men.** Ed. by Norman Foerster  
**Essays for College Men, Second Series.** Ed. by Foerster, Manchester, and Young  
**Representative Essays in Modern Thought.** Ed. by Steeves and Ristine  
**Selected Essays.** Ed. by C. M. Fuess  
**Essays in Liberal Thought.** Ed. by Thomas and Morgan  
**Thought and Its Expression.** Ed. by George C. Clancy  
**Understanding and Writing.** Ed. by George C. Clancy  
**Persistent Questions in Public Discussion.** Ed. by Drummond and Hunt

PERIODICALS

**Note.** — Articles not yet published in book form have been excluded from all the above lists; yet many of the best suggestions for speeches are to be found in such articles. For that

reason the student is urged to keep posted on the contents of all current periodicals. The following are especially useful:

**The Congressional Record.** The one completely unbiased and uncensored publication; published daily by the Government; full of basic material on all current topics of national scope.

**The Literary Digest.** Formerly a dignified, impartial weekly review and pool of press opinion; now cheapened and popularized, with journalistic leading articles.

**Time.** A frankly popular and hastily edited calendar of events.

**The Christian Science Monitor.** A newspaper that tries to be national in scope and balanced in interest.

**The Forum.** The most dignified of the discussion reviews.

**The Living Age.** Contains many important European articles in translation.

**Harpers.** A literary magazine which includes essays and articles on the times.

**The Atlantic Monthly.** A treasury of thoughtful articles, with literary standards.

**The New Republic.** A discussion paper appealing especially to discontented intellectuals.

**The Nation.** Another.

**The American Magazine.** Exactly opposite in spirit. Popular, patriotic, and optimistic.

**New York Times, Sunday Magazine.** Fresh and timely articles on major topics.

**New York Times, Book Review.** A weekly summary of current literature.

**The Saturday Review of Literature.** One of the best weekly book reviews.

(Excellent book review sections are also published by the *New York Herald Tribune*, the *London Times*, and many other papers. Weekly perusal of such a section is one of the best sources of stimulating ideas.)

It is clear that a list of this kind is suggestive only, and, in the nature of things, temporary. Even as this book goes to press new books or periodicals will appear that should be added, and old ones will lose interest. Periodicals come and go. Subjects of popular discussion change. The leaders of thought today are forgotten tomorrow.

But always there are universal truths and imperishable thoughts that refuse to be forgotten, and that furnish a basis of comparison with new ideas and new movements in the world.

The wise speaker will do two things: he will seek some acquaintance with the old, the universal, and the permanent, bearing in mind that man was not born yesterday, but has come a long, hard road, made many mistakes, and accumulated some wisdom; and he will strive to keep up with his own times, knowing as well as possible what his contemporaries are thinking and doing, and even looking a little, if he can, into the future.







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